# BOVVELS OPENED:

OR,

A Discovery of the Near and Dear Love, *Union* and *Communion* BETWIXT CHRIST and the CHURCH,

And consequently betwixt HIM and every BELEEVING SOUL.

Delivered in divers *Sermons* on the Fourth, Fifth, and Sixth Chapters Of the

# CANTICLES.

By that Reverend and faithfull Minister of the Word Dr SIBS, late Preacher unto the Honourable Society of *Grays-Inn*, and Master of *Katherine-Hall* in *Cambridge*.

Being in part finished by his own Pen in his life-time, and the rest of them perused and corrected by those whom he intrusted with the publishing of his *Works*.

*The fourth Edition.*

Cant. 4.11. *Thou hast ravished my heart, my Sister, my Spouse, thou hast ravished my heart with one of thine eies, and with one chain of thy neck,*

*London*, Printed by *W. Godbid* for *John Clarke*, and are to be sold at his shop at the lower end of Cheap-side at the entrance into *Mercers Chappel*, 1658.

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# DOMINO
## *EDVARDO* VICECOMITI MANDEVILLE;

*QUEM, UT*
VERÆ NOBILITATIS
DELICIAS, CANDORIS NIVEM,
IN RES *CHRISTI*,

*ET*
ALIORUM COMMODA
EFFUSISSIMUM,
SUSPICIMUS, COLIMUS;

*UNAQUE*
CONCIONES HAS IN *CANTICA*
POSTHUMAS

*IN*
AMORIS GRATIAM QUO *AUTHOREM* IPSE COMPLEXUS EST, NOSTRÆQUE IN DNUM ILLIUS MERITISSIMÆ OBSERVANTIÆ
*TESTIMONIUM*,

*D. D.*

THOMAS GOODVVIN,
PHILIPPUS NYE.

## *To the Christian Reader.*

THe perusall of this Book being committed unto me by an ancient and a faithfull Friend of mine, I found it (I confesse) so full of heavenly treasure, and such lively expressions of the unvaluable riches of the love of Christ toward all his poore servants that sue and seek unto him, that I sent unto the godly and learned Author, earnestly entreating him to publish the same, judging it altogether unmeet that so precious matter should be concealed from publick use. When he excused himselfe by undervaluing his own meditations, but withall signified his desire of the Churches good, if by any thing in his Works it might never so little be promoted, I could not but declare my self in recommending this Treatise, as a very profitable and excellent help both to the understanding of that dark and most divine Scripture, and also to kindle

in the heart all heavenly affections unto Ieſus Chriſt.

It is well known how backward I am, and ever have been to cumber the Preſs, but yet I would not be guilty in depriving the dear children of *God* of the ſpirituall and ſweet conſolations which are here very plentifully offered unto them.

And the whole frame of all theſe Sermons is carried with ſuch Wiſedom, Gravity, Piety, Judgement & experience, that it commends it ſelf unto all that are godly-wiſe: and I doubt not but that they ſhall find their temptations anſwered, their fainting ſpirits revived, their underſtandings enlightned, and their graces confirmed, ſo as they ſhall have cauſe to praiſe God for the worthy Authors godly and painfull labors. And thus deſiring the Father of all mercies, and the God of all comfort, to bleſſe this work to the conſolation and edification of thoſe that ſeek his favour, and deſire to feare his holy Name, I reſt

Thine in Jeſus Chriſt,

J. Dod.

# A Table of the chief Heads and Contents of the following *Sermons* in this Book.


THe Introduction, pag. 1

There is the ſame regard of the whole Church, and of every particular member in regard of the chiefeſt priviledges and graces that accompany Salvation, pag. 5

All creatures ſtand in obedience to Chriſt, pag. 6

The courſes that Chriſt takes with his Church may ſeem contrary, but by a wiſe ordering all agree in the wholſome Iſſue, pag. 7

In what reſpects the Spirit of God is compared to wind, pag. 8

In what reſpects we need the blowing of the Spirit, 11

In what reſpects the Church is compared to a Garden, 12

Chriſtians ſhould walk as men of a ſevered condition from the world, 14

Chriſtians planted in Gods Garden ſhould be fruitfull, 16

God cares for, and protecteth his Church, ibid.

We need not onely grace to put life into us at the firſt, but likewiſe grace to quicken and draw forth that life we have, 17

It is not enough to be good our ſelves, but our goodneſſe muſt flow out, 18

Where once God begins, he goes on; and adds encou-

ragement to encouragement, to maintain new ſetters up in Religion, 18
Whereſoever Grace is truly begun there is ſtill a further deſire of Chriſts preſence, 20
A gracious heart is privy to its own Grace when it is in a right temper, and ſo far as it is privy, is bold with Chriſt in a ſweet and reverend manner, 22
It is the duty and diſpoſition of the Church of Chriſt to pleaſe her Husband, ibid.
The Church gives all to Chriſt, 24
Comfort in the wants and blemiſhes of our performances, 23
The reſolution of the whole 5 chap. of Canticles, 26
The order of Gods hearing his Church, 28
God makes us good, ſtirs up holy deſires in us, and then anſwers the deſires of his Spirit in us, 28
Why God hears our prayers, 29
Caſes wherein one is unfit to pray, 31
How to know when God hears our prayers, 33
Chriſt vouchſafes his gracious preſence to his Children upon their deſire of it, 34
The Church is carried from deſire to deſire after the preſence of Chriſt, 35
How to know that Chriſt is preſent in us, 36
Where Chriſt is preſent, there Heaven is in ſome degree, 37
Having Chriſts preſence we need feare nothing, 38
Chriſt is our Brother, 39
The Churches royall deſcent, 41
The Church is the ſpouſe of Chriſt, 42
Reſemblances betwixt the temporall and ſpirituall marriage, 43
The comfort of Chriſt being our Husband, 45

Chri-

*Christians being the Spouse of Christ, should labour for chaste Judgments and affections,* 45
*Our affections are as their objects,* 46
*How to know whether we be espoused to Christ or not,* 47
*Encouragement and direction to those who are not yet in Christ,* 48
*God accepts of the graces of his children, and delights in them,* 50
*Encouragement to be much in holy duties,* 52
*Our care must be to preserve our selves in a good estate, free from the guilt of any sin,* 52
*Christ when he comes to a Soul comes not empty,* 53
*Exhortation to have communion with Christ,* 54
*We ought to rejoyce in the comforts and graces of others, and of our selves,* 56
*There is a mutuall feasting betwixt Christ and his Church,* 61
*Resemblances betwixt corporall feasts, and the feast Christ maketh us of himselfe,* 62
*What we should bring with us to the feast Christ makes us,* 64
*The means to procure an appetite to Christ,* 67
*All kinds and degrees of friendship meet in Christ towards his Church,* 70
*All the requisites to make up true friendship are found in Christ,* 71
*Friendship of Christ is sweet and constant,* 73
*The state of the Church and every Christian is subject to spirituall alterations,* ibid.
*Where corruption is not throughly purged, and a carefull watch kept over the soul, there after a recovery will follow a more dangerous distemper,* 75

*It is the disposition of Gods Children to be ingenuous in opening their state to God,* 75
*A gracious Soul is abased for lesser defects,* 77
*What meant by the sleep of the Church,* 78
*The resemblances between bodily and spirituall sleep in their causes, effects, and dangers,* 80
*Security and sleepinesse of the Church in* Constantines *time,* 83
*The judgements of best men cannot always be safely relied on,* 85
*Sleepinesse of the Church in these latter ages,* 86
*Signs of a sleepy estate,* 87
*Motives against sleepinesse.* 89
*A Christian may know how it is with himselfe, though he be mixed with flesh and spirit,* 94
*We should as well acknowledge that which is good, as that which is evill in our hearts,* 95
*The good that the Church retained in her sleepy condition,* ibid.
*Gods Children never totally fall from Grace,* 99
*A Christian is what his heart and inward man is,* 101
*Difference between a Christian and an Hypocrite,* 102
*A waking state is a blessed state.* 103
*Means how to preserve our souls in a waking condition in drowsy times,* 104
*Christians must especially be watchfull in the use of liberty, and such things as in themselves are lawfull,* 111
*The excellency of a waking Christian,* 112
*True Christians are discerned by a spirituall taste in hearing Gods word,* 116
*Papists objection, How should we know that the Word is the Word of God, answered,* 117

*Why ſo many Apoſtatize,* 118
*A Chriſtian is ſenſible of all the bleſſed helps he hath to ſalvation,* 119
*The difference between the ſleep of a Chriſtian and dead ſleep of naturall men,* ibid.
*Chriſt ſtill deſires a further and further Communion with his Church,* 120
*The cauſe of Chriſts ſtrangeneſſe to us is in our ſelves,* 121
*Chriſt takes not advantage from the ſinnes of the Church to leave them altogether, but makes further and further love to them,* 123
*How Chriſt is ſaid to knock at our hearts,* 125
*Why Chriſt knocks when he hath power to open to himſelf,* 131
*The heart of a Chriſtian is the Houſe and Temple of God,* 133
*How Chriſt can come into the Soul,* ibid.
*How we may know whether Chriſt dwels in our hearts,* ibid.
*We are to cheriſh all the good conceits we can of Chriſt,* 135
*The wofull eſtate of thoſe who entertain not Chriſt knocking at the door of their hearts,* 136
*That Chriſt hath uſed all kind of knockings to this Nation,* 138
*Conſiderations enforcing us to entertain Chriſt,* 140
*That Chriſts knocking is eſpecially by the Miniſtery of the Word,* 142
*There are none in the Church but have been allured at at ſome time or other to come in,* 143
*Encouragement to pray for the Church,* 145
*Chriſt hath never enough of his Church till he hath it in Heaven,* 146. *The*

*The ſuffering of Chriſt in himſelf and Miniſters,* 148
*Chriſts patience to us ſhould make us patient under Gods correction, and in our dealing with others,* 150
*The Church of God is Chriſts Siſter and ſpouſe,* 150
*The grounds of Chriſts ſpeciall love to his Church and Children,* 152
*No ſaving love out of the Church,* 154
*Properties of Chriſts love to his Church,* 145
*Whether Chriſt cannot ſee matter of weakneſſe and ſinfulneſſe in his Church,* 155
*How to know Chriſt loves us in a peculiar manner,* 157
*Reproof of thoſe who love not Gods children,* 159
*Why Chriſt calls his Church his Love,* 162
*An argument to prove the ſtability of the Saints, and the Souls immortality,* 164
*How tranſcendent Majeſty and infinite love dwelt together in Chriſt,* ibid.
*Why the Holy Ghoſt appeared in the ſhape of a Dove at Chriſts baptiſme,* 166
*Church why compared to a Dove,* ibid.
*Properties of a Dove reſembled to the Church,* 167
*What defence Gods Church hath when it is perſecuted,* 171
*That Gods Church hath always a refuge in God in the worſt times,* 172
*How the Church is ſaid to be undefiled,* 173
*How Chriſts righteouſneſſe not being in the Church, may yet be ſaid to be the Churches,* 174
*How we being ſinners may yet be ſaid to be undefiled,* 175

179
Direction how the afflicted in conscience are to judge themselves, 180
Crihstians are not to wrong themselves with false judging of their estates, 183
It is not an easie thing to bring the soul and Christ together into near fellowship, 185
False Reasons, excuses, and pretences hinder communion with Christ, 186
Excuses of the flesh to hinder our communion with Christ, answered, 187
Excuses of worldlings to hinder their communion with Christ, answered, 189
Causes of the false pretences and excuses which hinder many from holy duties, 191
Helps to keep us from putting off and delaying holy duties by false Reasons and excuses, 196
That Christ doth use sometimes to leave his Church and Children, 216
Ends why Christ leaves his Children, 218
Christians wanting comfort are not to be censured, 222
We are to prepare for desertion, 225
The cause of Christs with-drawing comfort from us, rests in our selves, 226
Christ never altogether leaves the Church, 228
Christs grace is the cause of our grace, 229
We find experience of the grace of Christ, especially when we stir up our selves to endeavour, 229
Gods graces are sweet, 230
Outward means without the Spirit of Christ are ineffectuall, 232

Christ

...t always leaves some grace be...
part, 233
Sins of omission bring grief and shame, 234
Christ hath our affections in his government, 238
Christ is wonderfull in his Saints, and in his goodnesse towards them, 240
Truth of affection will discover it selfe in outward expressions, 243
The word of Christ though for the present it be not effectuall, yet afterwards it will be, 244
Christ so leaves his Children sometimes, that their hearts faile them for want of his presence, 246
Causes of the fainting of Christian souls, 247
The difference between the true child of God and others, 248
Christ is many times present with the Church when she finds and feels it not, 252
How we are to judge of our selves in a dead estate, 253
We should depend upon Christ when he seems absent from us, 254
How to know God hears our prayers, 256
Directions how to carry our selves when we pray without successe, or in any estate of desertion, 257
It is no easie thing to be a sound Christian, 261
Governours of the Church and State compared to Watchmen, 262
Reasons why God useth Watchmen, 262
How the Church was wounded by the watchmen, 264
How the Churches vaile is taken away, 265
Why the Watchmen are the wounders of the Church, ibid.

*We are not to think the worſe of any for the diſgraces of the time,* 266
*True grace grows up with difficulties,* 271
*If we find not comfort in one means, we muſt have recourſe to another,* 272
*Reſemblances between Hieruſalem and the Church,* ibid.
*How to know we are daughters of Hieruſalem,* 274
*We are to deſire the prayers of others,* 276
*Love-ſick, what it is,* 277
*How to know we are ſick of Love to Chriſt,* 278
*How is the Church ſaid to be the faireſt among Women,* 287
*In what reſpects the Church calls her ſelfe black,* 289
*There is a wondrous force in the examples of Chriſtians to ſtir up one another,* 293
*The excellent uſe of holy conference,* 265
*Chriſtians ſhould be inquiſitive,* 298
*Whence comes the Churches fairneſſe under ſuch ſeeming foulneſſe and diſgrace,* 301
*How we are to judge of Gods people under ſeeming diſgraces,* 302
*Chriſtians are to improve the gifts of others by queſtions,* 303
*Our endeavours muſt be to make Religion lovely,* 304
*There is no envy in ſpirituall things,* 305
*Chriſt is a moſt beautifull perſon,* 307
*Chriſt as he is beautifull and good, ſo is he beyond all compariſon good,* 309
*Chriſt onely was a King, Prieſt, and Prophet,* 310
*Chriſts tranſcendent excellencies ſerve to draw thoſe*

*those that are not yet in Christ unto him, and to comfort those that are in Christ,* 316
*The desperate folly of most men who chuse base transitory things, and refuse Christ,* 318
*Christians ought to make Christ the rule of their choice in other things,* 321
*Means to enable us rightly to value Christ, and highly to esteem of him,* 322
*There is somewhat of God in every creature,* 329
*Why the Church is so exact in particularizing her Beloved,* 331
*Why Christ is set out by an head of Gold,* 334
*Christians should be suitable to Christ their Head,* 335
*Why Christ is said to have Doves eyes,* 337
*The manifestation of Christ to his children by his Spirit in any of his ordinances, is a sweet and delightfull manifestation,* 338
*Christs Doctrine is sweet and sound,* 341
*All Christs actions are precious,* 343
*The best discovery of our state in grace is by our affection to the word of Christ,* 346
*Christ every way considered is altogether lovely,* 349
*Christ in his lowest abasements for us was most lovely,* 350
*We are to rest upon Christs obedience and righteousnesse,* 351
*Our best affections ought to be set upon Christ,* 352
*How to know whether we love Christ,* 353
*Means whereby we may be enabled to love and highly esteem of Christ,* 359

*Ends*

*Ends why the Church in generall and particular ſets forth the excellencies of Chriſt,* p. 363
*Grace, though it be never ſo ſmall at the firſt, yet it is growing ſtill,* 371
*Uſually God works with the means,* 372
*How to be happy Inſtruments to convert others,* 375
*That which moſt ſtirs up holy affections to ſeek after Chriſt, is the large explications of his excellencies.* 376
*In what reſpects Chriſtians are compared to Lillies,* 380
*Comfort to Gods people againſt all their ill cenſures and wants,* 382
*Chriſt will not be long abſent from his Chureh,* 385
*We are to wait, and never to give over ſeeking of Chriſt,* 386
*There muſt be union of perſons to Chriſt before there can be communion with him,* 389
*From the union of our perſons to Chriſt comes communion of all other things,* 390
*What theſe words imply,* I am my Beloveds, and my Beloved is mine, 392
*Cauſes why God abſents himſelf from his children,* 397
*When uſually Chriſt returns after deſertion,* 398
*How Chriſt comes to be ours,* 399
*The riches of a Chriſtian that has Chriſt to be his portion,* ibid.
*Chriſtians having Chriſt for their portion, ſhould be contented with their outward condition whatſoever it is,* 400
*Why ſometimes we want outward things being in Chriſt.* 401

*How we are Christs beloved,* 402
*Sufferings of the Church are to conform her to Christ her Husband,* 404
*The sweetest communion with Christ is under the greatest crosses,* 405
*Our giving our selves to Christ, is a sure evidence that we are Christs,* 406
*How to answer Satan when he tempts us to sin or despair,* 407
*Reasons why Christ must be given to us before we can give our selves to him,* 410
*Direction how to be enabled to say,* I am my Beloveds, and my Beloved is mine, 415
*The excellency of a Christian walking in Divine light above other men,* 420
*Exhortation and encouragement for those who are not yet in Christ, to come in,* ibid.
*Those who have given themselves up to Christ, ought not to be discouraged for their infirmities,* 422
*We must labour to comprehend the love of Christ to us, which will enable us to suffer willingly and cheerefully,* 423
*Christ feeds his Church and people in fat pastures,* 424
*Christ feeds as well as breeds,* 426
*Reasons of the necessity of our continuall feeding in Christianity,* 428
*Christ feeds his people plentifully and sweetly,* ibid.
*Happinesse of these times wherein there is such plenty of Spirituall food,* 429
*The sweetnesse of our lives is not lost by becoming Religious,* 430
*How to get hungry appetites to the Sacrament,* 434

# SERMON I.

CANT. V. I.

*I am come into my Garden, my Sister, my Spouse; I have eaten my honey-comb with my honey: I have drunk my wine with my milk: Eat O friends, Drink, yea drink abundantly, O Beloved!*

*Introduct.*

OTher books of SOLOMON lie more obvious and open to common understanding; but as none entred into the *Holy of Holies* but the *High-Priest*, so none can enter into the mystery of this *Song of Songs*, but such as have more near communion with *Christ*. *Songs*, and especially *Marriage-Songs*, serve to expresse men's own *joys*, and other praises; So this Book contains

*The mutuall joys and mutuall praises betwixt Christ and his Church.*

And as *Christ* and his *Church* are the greatest persons that partake of humane nature; so whatsoever is excellent in the whole world, is borrowed to set out the excellencies of these two great Lovers.

It is called *Solomons Song*, who next unto *Christ* was the greateſt Son of *Wiſedome* that ever the *Church* bred: whoſe underſtanding, as it was large as the ſand of the ſea, ſo his affections, eſpecially that of *Love*, was as large, as we may ſee by his many wives, and by the delight he ſought to take in whatſoever nature could afford. Which affection of *Love* in him miſplaced, had been his undoing, but that he was one beloved of God, who by his Spirit raiſed his ſoul to lovely objects of an higher nature. Here in this argument there is no danger for the deepeſt wit, or the largeſt affection, (yea of a *Solomon*) to over-reach; for the knowledge of the love of *Chriſt* to his *Church* is above all knowledg. The *Angels* themſelves may admire it, though they cannot comprehend it. It may well therefore be called the *Song* of *Solomon*, the moſt excellent *Song*, of a man of the higheſt conceit, and deepeſt apprehenſion, and of the higheſt matters, *The intercourſe betwixt Chriſt the higheſt Lord of Lords, and his beſt beloved contracted Spouſe.*

Ephes. 3. 19.

There are divers things in this *Song* that a corrupt heart (unto which all things are defiled) may take offence; but *to the pure all things are pure.* Such a ſinful abuſe of this heavenly Book is far from the intention of the Holy Ghoſt in it, which is by ſtooping low to us, to take advantage to raiſe us higher unto him; that by taking advantage of the ſweeteſt paſſage of our life (*Marriage*,) and the moſt delightfull affection (*Love*,) in the ſweeteſt manner of expreſſion (by a *Song*,) he might carry up the ſoul to things of an heavenly nature. We ſee in Summer, that one heat weakens another; & a great light

*Simile.*

light being near a little one, draws away and obſcures the flame of the other: ſo it is when the affections are taken up higher to their fit object, they die unto all earthly things, whilſt that heavenly flame conſumes and waſts all baſe affections and earthly deſires. Amongſt other wayes of *Mortification*, there be two remarkable:

*Simile.*

*Two eſpeciall wayes of mortification.*

1. *By imbittering all earthly things unto us, whereby the affections are deaded to them.*
2. *By ſhewing more noble, excellent and fit objects.*

That the ſoul iſſuing more largely and ſtrongly into them, may be diverted, and ſo by degrees die unto other things. The holy Spirit hath choſen this way in this *Song*, by elevating and raiſing our *affections* and *love*, to take it off from other things, that ſo it might run in its right chanell. It is pity, that a ſweet ſtream ſhould not rather run into a *garden*, then into a puddle. What a ſhame is it, that man having in him ſuch excellent affections, as *love*, *joy*, *delight*, ſhould cleave to durty baſe things that are worſe than himſelf, ſo becoming debaſed like them? Therefore the Spirit of God, out of mercy and pity to man, would raiſe up his affections, by taking compariſon from earthly things, leading to higher matters, that onely deſerve *love*, *joy*, *delight*, and *admiration*. Let Gods ſtooping to us occaſion our riſing up unto him; for, here the greateſt things, The *Myſterie* of *Myſteries*, the *Communion* betwixt *Chriſt* and his *Church*, is ſet out in the familiar compariſon of a *Marriage*, that ſo we might the better ſee it in the glaſs of a compariſon, which we cannot ſo directly conceive of: as we may ſee the *Sun* in water, whoſe beams we can-

not ſo directly look upon: Onely our care muſt be, not to look ſo much on the *colours* as the *Picture*; and not ſo much on the *Picture* as on the *Perſon* it ſelf repreſented; that we look not ſo much to the *reſemblance*, as to the *Perſon reſembled*.

Some would have *Solomon* by a *Spirit of prophecy*, to take here a view of all the time from his Age to the ſecond comming of Chriſt: and in this *Song*, as in an abridgment, to ſet down the ſeverall *paſſages* and *periods* of the *Church* in ſeveral ages, as containing divers things which are more correſpondent to one age of the *Church* than another. But howſoever this *Song* may contain (we deny not) *A ſtory of the Church in ſeveral ages*: yet this hinders not, but that *moſt paſſages of it agree to the ſpiritual ſtate of the Church in every age*; as moſt Interpreters have thought. In this *Song there is*,

1. *A ſtrong deſire of the Church of nearer communion with Chriſt*; *and then*,
2. *Some declining again in affection.*
3. *After this we have Her recovery and regaining again of Love*; *after which*,
4. *The Church fals again into a declining of affection, whereupon follows a further ſtrangeneſſe of Chriſt to her then before*; which continues untill,
5. *That the Church perceiving of Chriſts conſtant affection unto her, notwithſtanding her unkind dealing, recovers and cleaves faſter to Chriſt than ever before*, Chap. 3.

Theſe paſſages agree to the experience of the beſt Chriſtians in the ſtate of their own lives. This obſervation muſt carry ſtrength through this whole

*An Obſervation for the whole Song.*

whole *Song*, That, *there is the ſame regard of the whole Church, and of every particular member, in regard of the chiefeſt priviledges and graces that accompany ſalvation.* There is the ſame reaſon of every drop of water, as of the whole *Ocean*, all is water; and of every ſpark of fire, as of the whole Element of fire, all is fire; of thoſe Homogeneall bodies, as we call them, there is the ſame reſpect of the part and of the whole. *And therefore as the whole Church is the Spouſe of Chriſt, ſo is every particular Chriſtian: and as the whole Church deſires ſtill nearer communion with Chriſt, ſo doth every particular member.* But to come to the words:

*I am come into my Garden, &c.*

This chapter is not ſo well broken and divided from the former as it might have been; for it were better and more conſequent, that the laſt verſe of the former chapter were added to the beginning of this.

CANT. IV. XVI.

*Awake, O North-wind, and come thou South, blow upon my Garden, that the Spices thereof may flow out: let my Beloved come into his Garden, and eat his pleaſant fruits.*

And therefore by reaſon of connexion of this Chapter with the former Verſe, we will firſt ſpeak ſomewhat of it briefly, onely to make way for that which follows. The words contain,

1. *A turning of Chriſts ſpeech to the winds to blow upon his Garden*: With the *End* why: *That the Spices thereof may flow out.*
2. *We have an invitation of Chriſt by the Church to come into his Garden*; With the *End*, *To eat his pleaſant fruits.*

*Quest.* It may be a queſtion, whether this *command* be *the words of Chriſt*, or *the deſire of his Spouſe*. The

*Anſw.* words are ſpoken by Chriſt, becauſe he cals it *(My Garden;)* and the *Church* after invites him to eat of *(His) pleaſant fruites*, not of *(Hers;)* yet the words may be likewiſe *an anſwer to a former ſecret deſire of the Church*: whereof the order is this, The *Church* being ſenſible of ſome deadneſs of Spirit, ſecretly deſires ſome further quickning. *Chriſt* then anſwers thoſe deſires, by commanding the winds to blow upon her; For, ordinarily *Chriſt* firſt ſtirs up deſires, and then anſwers the deſires of his own Spirit by further increaſe, as here,

*Awake thou Northwind, and come thou South, and blow upon my Garden, &c.*

For the firſt Point named, we ſee here, that *Chriſt* ſends forth his Spirit, with command to all *means*, under the name of *North* and *South-wind*, to further the fruitfulneſs of his *Church*. The *wind* is natures fann; what the *winds* are to the *Garden*, that the Spirit of *Chriſt*, in the uſe of means, is to the ſoul. From a compariſon fetcht from *Chriſts* commanding the *winds*, we may in generall obſerve, That *all creatures ſtand in obedience to Chriſt, as ready at a word, whenſoever he ſpeaks to them.* They are all as it were aſleep untill he awakes them. He can call for the *wind* out of his treaſures when he pleaſes, he holds them in his fiſt.

*Obſervation from Chriſts commanding the winds.*

*uſe.* Which may comfort all thoſe that are *Chriſts*, that they are under one that hath all creatures at his beck under him to do them ſervice, and at his check to do them no harm. This drew the

Matth. 8. 27. *Diſciples* in admiration to ſay, *What manner of man*

*man is this, that even the winds and the ſeas obey him?* And cannot the ſame power ſtill the winds and waves of the *Church* and *State*, and cauſe a ſudden calm, if (as the Diſciples) we awake him with our prayers?

Secondly, we ſee here, that *Chriſt* ſpeaks to *winds contrary one to another*, both in regard of the coaſts from whence they blow, and in their quality; but both agree in this, that both are neceſſary for the *Garden*: where we ſee, That *the courſes that* Chriſt *takes, and the means that he uſeth with his Church, may ſeem contrary, but by a wiſe ordering all agree in the wholſome iſſue.* A proſperous and an afflicted condition are contrary, a milde and a ſharp courſe may ſeem to croſs one another; yet ſweetly they agree in this, that as the *Church* needeth both, ſo *Chriſt* uſes both for the *Churches* good. The *North* is a *nipping wind*, and the *South* a *cheriſhing wind*, therefore the *South-wind* is the welcommer and ſweeter after the *North-wind* hath blown. But howſoever, all things are ours, *Paul, Apollos, Cephas, things preſent and to come, life, death, &c. all things work together for good to us, being in* Chriſt.

*Obſervation from the contrary blaſts of winds.*

1 Cor. 3. 21.

Rom. 8. 28.

Hence it is that the manifold wiſdome of *Chriſt* maketh uſe of ſuch variety of conditions; and hence it is, that the Spirit of *Chriſt* is milde in ſome mens Miniſteries, and ſharp in others. Nay, in the very ſame Miniſter, as the ſtate of the ſoul they have to deal withall requires.

*Uſe* 1.

Sometimes again, *the people of God need purging, and ſometimes refreſhing*: whereupon the Spirit of God carries it ſelf ſuitably to both conditions, and the Spirit in the godly themſelves draws good out of

2.

of every condition; ſure they are that all winds blow them good; and were it not for their good, no *winds* ſhould blow upon them. But in regard that theſe times of ours, by long peace and plenty, grow cold, heavy and ſecure, we therefore need all kinds of *winds* to blow upon us, and all little enough. Time was when we were more quick and lively; but now the heat of our ſpirits is abated; we muſt therefore take heed of it, and *quicken thoſe things that are ready to die*, or elſe in ſtead of the *North* and *South-wind*, God will ſend an *Eaſtwind* that ſhall dry up all, as it is, *Hoſ.* 13.15.

Revel. 2. 3.

3. Again, if *Chriſt* can raiſe or lay, binde up or let looſe all kind of *winds* at his pleaſure, then if means be wanting or fruitleſſe, *It is he that ſayes to the clouds, drop not; and to the winds, blow not*: Therefore we muſt acknowledge him in want or plenty of means. The Spirit of *Chriſt* in the uſe of means is a *free agent*, ſometimes blowes ſtrongly, ſometimes more mildly, ſometimes not at all; no creature hath theſe *winds* in a bag at command, and therefore it is wiſdome to yield to the gales of the Spirit, though in ſome other things (as *Solomon* obſerves) it may hinder to obſerve the *winds*, yet here it is neceſſary and profitable to obſerve the winds of the Spirit.

Eccleſ. 11. 4.

Now for the clear underſtanding of what we are to ſpeak of, let us firſt obſerve,

1. *Why the Spirit of God in the uſe of the meanes is compared to wind.* And then,
2. *Why the Church is compared to a Garden*: which ſhall be handled in the proper place.

*In what reſpects the Spirit of God is compared to wind.*

But firſt for the *wind*.

1. *The*

1. *The wind bloweth where it liſteth,* as it is, *Joh.*3.8. So the Spirit of God blowes freely, and openeth the heart of ſome, and poureth grace plentifully in them.
2. *The wind (eſpecially the North-wind) hath a cleanſing force*; ſo the Spirit of God purgeth our hearts *from dead works to ſerve the living God*, making us partakers of the divine nature, 2 *Pet.* 1.
3. *The wind diſperſeth and ſcattereth clouds, and makes a ſerenity in the aire*: So doth the Spirit diſperſe ſuch clouds as corruption and Satan raiſe up in the ſoul, that we may clearly ſee the face of God in *Jeſus Chriſt*.
4. *The wind hath a cooling and a tempering quality, and tempers the diſtemper of nature*: as in ſome hot countreys there be yearly Anniverſary winds which blow at certain times in Summer, tempering the heat: ſo the Spirit of God allayeth the unnatural heats of the ſoul in fiery tentations, and bringeth it into a good temper.
5. *The wind being ſubtil ſearcheth into every corner and crany.* So the Spirit likewiſe is of a ſearching nature, and diſcerneth betwixt the joynts and the marrow, betwixt the fleſh and the ſpirit, &c. ſearching thoſe hidden corruptions that nature could never have found out.
6. *The wind hath a cheriſhing and a fructifying force.* So the Spirit is a quickning and a cheriſhing Spirit, and maketh the heart which is as a barren wilderneſſe, to be fruitfull.
7. *The wind hath a conveying power of ſweet ſmels in the air, to carry them from one to another.* So the Spirit

Spirit in the word conveyeth the ſeeds of grace and comfort from one to another; it draws out what ſweetneſs is in the ſpirits of men, & makes them fragrant and delightfull to others.

8. *The wind again bears down all before it, beats down houſes and trees, like the cedars in Lebanon*, turns them up by the rootes, and layes all flat. So the Spirit is mighty in operation, there is no ſtanding before it: It brings down mountains, and every high thing that exalts it ſelf, and layes them level: nay, the *Roman*, and thoſe other mighty Empires could not ſtand before it.

For theſe reſpects and the like, the *blowing of the Spirit* is compared to *wind*. For which end Chriſt here commands the winds to

*Blow upon his Garden.*

[ *To blow, &c.* ] See here the order, linking and concatenation of things one under another; to the proſpering of a poor flower or plant in a *garden*, not only ſoyl is needfull, but aire and wind alſo, and the influence of heaven: and God commanding all, as here, the *winds to blow upon his Garden*. To this end, as a wonderfull mercy to his people, it is ſaid, *Hoſ.* 2. 22. *And it ſhall come to paſs in that day, I will hear, ſaith the Lord, I will hear the heavens, and they ſhall hear the earth, and the earth ſhall hear the corn, the wine, and the oyl; and they ſhall hear Jezreel.* As the Creatures are from God, ſo the order and dependence of creatures one from another: to teach us, not only what to pray for, but alſo what to pray fitly for. Not only to pray for the dew of heaven, but alſo for ſeaſonable and cheriſhing winds. *It is not the ſoyle, but the ſeaſon that makes fruitfull*; and that

that from ſeaſonable winds and influences. So, *in Spirituall things there is a chain of cauſes and effects*; *Prayer* comes from *faith*, *Rom.* 10. 14. *Faith* from the *hearing* of the Word, *Hearing* from a *Preacher*, by whom God by his Spirit blows upon the heart, and a *Preacher* from *Gods ſending*. If the God of Nature ſhould but hinder and take away one link of natures chain, the whole frame would be diſturbed. VVell, That which *Chriſt* commands here, is for the winds to

*Blow upon his Garden.*

And we need blowing, our ſpirits will be becalmed elſe, and ſtand at a ſtay, and Satan will be ſure by himſelfe, and ſuch as are his bellows, to blow up the ſeeds of ſinfull luſts in us. For there are two ſpirits in the *Church*, the one blowing always againſt the other: Therefore the beſt had need to be ſtirred up, otherwiſe with *Moſes* their hands will be ready to fall down & abate in their affection. Therefore we need *Blowing*:

*In what reſpect we need the blowing of the Spirit.*

Exod. 17. 12.

1. *In regard of our naturall inability.*
2. *In regard of our dulneſſe and heavineſſe cleaving to nature occaſionally.*
3. *In regard of contrary winds from without:* Satan hath his bellows filled with his Spirit, that hinders the worke of grace all they can, ſo that we need not onely *Chriſts blowing*, but alſo his ſtopping other *contrary winds* that they blow not, *Rev.* 7. 1.
4. *In regard of the eſtate and condition of the new Covenant*, wherein all beginning, growth, and ending is from *grace*, and nothing but *grace*.

5. *Be-*

5. *Because old grace without a fresh supply, will not hold against new crosses and tentations.*

*Use.* Therefore when *Christ* draws, let us run after him; when he *blows*, let us open unto him; *It may be the last blast that ever we shall have from him.* And let us set upon Duties with this encouragement, that *Christ* will blow upon us, not onely to prevent us, but also to maintain his own graces in us. But O! where is this stirring up of our selves, and one another upon these grounds?

*Quest.* But, *Why is the Church compared to a Garden?*

*Answ.* Christ herein takes all manner of terms to expresse himselfe and the state of Church as it is to him; to shew us, that whereſoever we are, we may have occasion of heavenly thoughts, to raise up our thoughts to higher matters. His Church is his *Temple* when we are in the *Temple*; it is a *field* when we are there; A *Garden* if we walk in a *Garden*: It is also a *Spouse* and a *Sister*, &c. But more particularly the *Church* is resembled to a *Garden*:

*In what respect the Church is compared to a Garden.*

1. *Because a Garden is taken out of the common waste ground, to be appropriated to a more particular use*; so the *Church* of *Christ* is taken out of the wilderness of this waste world, to a particular use. It is in respect of the rest, as *Goshen* to *Egypt*, wherein light was, when all else was in darkness. And indeed wherein doth the *Church* differ from other grounds, but that Christ hath taken it in? It is the same soyle as other grounds are, but he dresseth and fits it to bear spices and herbs.

1. Exod. 6. 29.

2. *In a Garden nothing comes up naturally of it self*, but as it is planted and set: so nothing is good in the heart but as it is planted and set by the heavenly

2. John 15 21.

venly Husbandman. VVe need not ſow the wilderneſſe, for the ſeeds of weeds proſper naturally, the earth is a mother to weeds, but a ſtep-mother to herbs. So weeds and paſſions grow too rank naturally, but nothing grows in the *Church* of it ſelfe, but as it is ſet by the hand of *Chriſt*, who is the Author, Dreſſer, and Pruner of his Garden.

Again, *in a garden nothing uſes to be planted but what is uſefull and delightfull*: ſo there is no grace in the heart of a Chriſtian, but it is uſefull (as occaſion ſerves) both to God and man. 3.

Further, *in a Garden there are variety of flowers, and ſpices*, eſpecially in thoſe hot countreys; ſo in a Chriſtian there is ſomewhat of every grace. As ſome cannot hear of a curious flower, but they will have it in their Garden; ſo a Chriſtian cannot heare of any grace, but he labours to obtain it, they labour for graces for all ſeaſons and occaſions. They have for *proſperity, temperance and ſobriety*; for *adverſity, patience*, and *hope* to ſuſtain them; for thoſe that are *above them*, they have *reſpect* and *obedience*; and for thoſe *under them*, *ſuitable uſuage* in all conditions of Chriſtianity: For the Spirit of God in them is a ſeminary of ſpirituall good things: as in the corruption of nature, before the Spirit of God came to us, there was the ſeminary of all ill weeds in us; ſo when there is a new quality, and new principles put into us, therewith come the ſeeds of all graces. 4. *Simile.* *Reaſon.*

Again, *of all other places we moſt delight in our gardens, to walk there and take our pleaſure*, and take care thereof, for fencing, weeding, watering, & planting. So Chriſts chief care and delight is for his Church: he walks in the midſt of the *ſeven golden Candleſticks*; 5.

*ſticks*; and if he defend and protect States, it is that they may be harbour to his Church.

6. And then again, as in Gardens there had wont to be *fountains* and *ſtreams* which run through their Gardens; as *Paradiſe* had four *ſtreams* which ran through it: So the Church is *Chriſts Paradiſe*, and his Spirit is a ſpring in the midſt of it, to refreſh the ſouls of his upon all their faintings; and ſo the ſoul of a Chriſtian becomes as a *watered Garden.*

7. So alſo, *their fountains were ſealed up*: ſo the joys
Cant. 4. 12. of the Church and particular Chriſtians, are as it
Prov. 14. 10. were ſealed up. *A ſtranger* (it is ſaid) *ſhall not meddle with this joy of the Church.*

8. Laſtly, *A Garden ſtands always in need of weeding and dreſſing*; continuall labour and coſt muſt be beſtowed upon it; ſometimes planting, pruning, and weeding, &c. So in the Church and hearts of Chriſtians, Chriſt hath always ſomewhat to doe, we would elſe ſoon be over-grown and turn wild: In all which, and the like reſpects, Chriſt calleth upon the *winds to blow upon his Garden.*

*Uſe* 1. If then the Church be a ſevered portion, then, *We ſhould walke as men of a ſevered condition from the world*, not as men of the world, but as Chriſtians, to make good that we are ſo, by feeling the graces of Gods Spirit in ſome comfortable meaſure, that ſo Chriſt may have ſomething in us, that he may delight to dwell with us, ſo to be ſubject to his pruning and dreſſing. For, *it is ſo far from being an ill ſign, that Chriſt is at coſt with us, in following us with affliction, that it is rather a ſure ſign of his love.* For the care of this bleſſed Husbandman is to prune us ſo, as to make us fruitfull. Men care not

for

SERM. I.

for heath and wilderneſs whereupon they beſtow no coſt: So when God prunes us by croſſes and afflictions, and ſowes good ſeed in us, it is a ſign he means to dwell with us, and delight in us.

2. And then alſo we ſhould not ſtrive ſo much for common liberties of the world that common people delight in, but for peculiar graces, that God may delight in us as his *garden*.

3. And then let us learn hence, *not to deſpiſe any nation or perſon*, ſeeing God can take out of the waſte wilderneſſe whom he will, and make the *Deſart* an *Eden*.

4. Again, let us bleſſe God for our ſelves, that our lot hath fallen into ſuch a pleaſant place, to be planted in the Church the place of Gods delight.

5. And this alſo ſhould move us *to be fruitfull*, for men will endure a fruitleſſe tree in the waſt wildernes, but in their garden who will endure it? *Dignity ſhould mind us of duty*. It is ſtrange to be fruitleſſe and barren in this place that we live in, being watered with the dew of heaven, under the ſweet influence of the means. This fruitleſſe eſtate being often watered from heaven, how fearfully is it threatned by the holy Ghoſt? that *it is near unto curſing and burning*: For in this caſe, viſible Churches, if they proſper not, God will remove the hedge, and lay them waſte, having a *Garden* elſewhere. Sometimes Gods plants proſper better in *Babylon*, than in *Judea*. It is to be feared God may complain of us, as he doth of his people, Jer. 2. 21. *I have planted thee a noble vine, how art thou then come to be degenerated?* If in this caſe we regard iniquity in our heart, the Lord will not regard the beſt thing that comes

Heb. 6. 8.

SERM. I.

from us, as our prayers, *Heb.* 12. 18. *Heb.* 13. We must then learn of himself, how and wherein to please him. Obedience from a broken heart is the best sacrifice. Mark in Scriptures what he abhors, what he delights in: we use to say of our friends, would God I knew how to please them: Christ teacheth us, that *without faith it is impossible to please him.* Let us then strive and labour to be fruitfull in our *places* and *callings*; for it is the greatest honour in this world, for God to dignifie us with such a condition, as to make us fruitfull. *We must not bring forth fruit to our selves,* as God complains of *Ephraim. Honour, riches,* and the like, are but secondary things, arbitrary at Gods pleasure to cast in; but *to have an active heart, fruitfull from this ground, that God hath planted us for this purpose, that we may do good to mankind; this is an excellent consideration not to prophane our calling.* The blessed man is said to be *a tree planted by the watees side, that brings forth fruit in due season*; but it is not every fruit, not that fruit which *Moses* complains of, *Deut* 31. 32. *The wine of Dragons, and the gall of Aspes*; but good fruit, as *John* speaks, *Every tree that bringeth not fr th good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire.*

Heb. 11. 6.

Hos. 10. 1.

Mat. 3. 10.

6. Lastly, in that the Church is called Christs *garden*, this may strengthen our faith in Gods care and protection. The Church may seem to lie open to all incursions, but it hath an invisible hedge about it, a *wall* without it, and a *well* within it. God himself is *a wall of fire about it,* and his Spirit a well of living waters running through it to refresh and comfort it. As it was said of *Canaan*, so it may be said of the Church, *The eye of the Lord is upon*

Zach. 2. 5.

Rev. 22. 1.

*it*

SERM. I.

*it all the year long*, and he waters it continually. From which especiall care of Gods over it, this is a good plea for us to God, *I am thine, save me*; I am a plant of thine own setting, nothing is in me, but what is thine, therefore cherish what is thine: So for the whole Church, the plea is good; the Church is thine, fence it, water it, defend it, keep the wilde bore out of it: Therefore the enemies thereof shall one day know what it is to make a breach upon Gods vineyard. In the mean time let us labour to keep our hearts as a *garden*, that nothing that defileth may enter. In which respects the Church is compared to a *garden*, upon which Christ commands the *North* and *South-wind* (all the meanes of grace) *to blow*.

*But to what end must these winds blow upon the Garden?*

*That the Spices thereof may flow out.*

The end of this *blowing* is you see, *That the Spices thereof may flow out*; good things in us lie dead and bound up unless the Spirit let them out. *We ebb and flow, open and shut, as the Spirit blows upon us; without blowing, no flowing.* There were gracious good things in the Church, but they wanted *blowing* up and further spreading, whence we may observe, That

*We need not onely grace to put life into us at the first, but likewise grace to quicken and draw forth that grace that we have.* This is the difference betwixt mans *blowing* and the Spirits; man when he *blows* (if grace be not there before) spends all his labour upon a dead coal, which he cannot make take fire. But the Spirit first kindles a holy fire, and then increases the flame. Christ had in the use of means

*Observ.*

SERM. I. wrought on the Church before, and now further promoteth his own work. We must first take in, and then send out: first, be cisterns to contain, and then, conduits to convey. The *wind* first *blows*, and then the *Spices* of the *Church flow out*: *We are first sweet in our selves, and then sweet to others.*

*Observ.* Whence we see further, That *it is not enough to be good in our selves, but our goodness must flow out*: that is, grow more stronge, usefull to continue and stream forth for the good of others. We must labour to be (as was said of *John*) *burning and shining Christians*: for Christ is not like a box of oyntment shut up and not opened, but like that box of oyntment that *Mary* poured out, which perfumes all the whole house with the sweetness thereof: For the Spirit is herein like *wind*, it carries the sweet savour of grace to others. A Christian so soon as he finds any rooting in God, is of a spreading disposition, and makes the places he lives in the better for him. The whole body is the better for every good member, as we see in *Onesimus*: the meanest persons when they become good, are usefull and profitable; of briers become flowers: the very naming of a good man casts a sweet savour, as presenting some grace to the heart of the hearer. For, *then we have what we have to purpose, when others have occasion to blesse God for us, for conveying comfort to them by us.* And for our furtherance herein, therefore the *winds* are called upon to *awake and blow upon Christs garden.*

Philem. 10.

*That the Spices thereof may flow out.*

*Observ.* Hence we see also, That *where once God begins, he goes on, and delights to adde encouragement to encouragement*,

SERM. J.

*couragement, to maintain new ſetters up in Religion*: and doth not only give them a ſtock of grace at the beginning, but alſo helps them to trade; He is not onely *Alpha* but *Omega* unto them: The *beginning* and the *ending*. He doth not onely plant graces, but alſo watereth and cheriſheth them; where the Spirit of Chriſt is, it is an encouraging Spirit: For not onely it infuſeth grace, but alſo ſtirs it up, that we may be ready prepared for every good work, otherwiſe we cannot do that which we are able to do; the Spirit muſt bring all into exerciſe, elſe the habits of grace will lie aſleep; we need a preſent Spirit to do every good: not onely the power to will, but the will it ſelf; and not only the will but the deed is from the Spirit. Which ſhould ſtir us up to go to Chriſt, that he may ſtir up his own graces in us, that they may flow out.

Rev. 1. 8.

Let us labour then in our ſelves to be full of goodneſs, that ſo we may be fitted to do good to all: as God is good and does good to all, ſo muſt we ſtrive to be as like him as may be. In which caſe for others ſakes, we muſt pray, that God would make the *winds* to blow out fully upon us, *That our ſpices may flow out* for their good. For a Chriſtian in his right temper thinks, that he hath nothing good to purpoſe, but that which does good to others. Thus farre of *Chriſts* command to the *North* and *South-wind to awake and blow upon his garden, that the ſpices thereof may flow out*. In the next place we have,

*Uſe.*

2. *Chriſts invitation by the Church to come into his Garden*. With the *End* thereof, *To eat his pleaſant Fruits*.

Which words ſhew, *The Churches further deſire*

SERM. I.

*of Christs presence to delight in the graces of his own Spirit in her.* She invites him to come and take delight in the graces of his own Spirit. And she calls him *Beloved*, because all her love is, or should be imparted and spent on Christ, who gave himself to a cursed death for her. Our love should runne in strength no other way, therefore the Church calls Christ her *Beloved*. Christ was there before, but she desires a further presence of him: whence we may observe; That;

*Observ.* *Whereſoever grace is truly begun and stirred up, there is still a further desire of Christs presence*, and approching daily more and more near to the soul; the Church never thinks him near enough to her, untill she be in heaven with him. The true *Spouse* and *Bride* alwayes (unless in desertion and temptation)

Rev. 22. 17. cryeth, *Come Lord Jesus, come quickly.* Now these degrees of Christs approches to the soul untill his second Coming, are, That he may manifest himself more and more in defending, comforting, and enabling his Church with grace; every further manifestation of his presence is a further Coming.

But why is the Church thus earnest?

*Reason* 1. First, because grace helps to see our need of Christ, and so helps us to prize him the more; which high esteem breeds an hungring earnest desire after him, and a desire of further likenesse and suitablenesse to him.

2. Secondly, because the Church well knows, That when Christ comes to the soul, he comes not alone, but with his Spirit, and his Spirit with abundance of peace and comfort. This she knows, what need she hath of his Presence, that without him there

there is no comfortable living: For whereſoever he is, he makes the ſoul a kind of heaven, and all conditions of life comfortable.

Hence we may ſee that thoſe that do not deſire the preſence of Chriſt in his ordinances, are (it is to be feared) ſuch as the *wind* of the Holy Ghoſt never blew upon. There are ſome of ſuch a diſpoſition, as they cannot endure the preſence of Chriſt: ſuch as Antichriſt and his limbs, whom the preſence of Chriſt in his Ordinances blaſts and conſumes. Such are not onely prophane and worldly perſons, but proud hypocrites, who glory in ſomething of their own, and therefore their hearts riſe againſt Chriſt and his Ordinances, as laying open, and ſhewing their emptineſs & carnalneſs. The Spirit in the *Spouſe* is alwayes ſaying to Chriſt, *Come*. It hath never enough of him, he was now in a ſort preſent: but the Church (after it is once *blown up*) is not ſatisfied without a further preſence. It is from the Spirit, that we deſire more of the Spirit, and from the preſence of Chriſt, that we deſire a further Preſence and Communion with him. Now,

*Uſe.*

*The End and Reaſon why Chriſt is deſired by the Church to come into his Garden*, is,

[*To eat his pleaſant fruits.*] that is, to give him contentment. And is it not fit that Chriſt ſhould eat the fruit of his own vine, have comfort of his own *Garden*, to taſte of his own fruits? The onely delight Chriſt hath in the world, is in his *Garden*: and that he might take the more delight in it, he makes it fruitfull, and thoſe fruits are precious fruits, as growing from plants ſet by his own hand, reliſhing of his own Spirit, and ſo fitted for his taſt.

SERM. I. Now the Church knowing what fitted Chriſts taſte beſt, and knowing the fruits of grace in her heart, deſireth that Chriſt would delight in his own graces in her, and kindly accept of what ſhe preſented him with: Whence we ſee, That,

*Obſerv.* *A gracious heart is privie to its own grace and ſincerity when it is in a right temper: and ſo far as it is privie, is bold with Chriſt in a ſweet and reverent manner:* So much ſincerity, ſo much confidence. If our heart condemn us not of unſincerity, we may in a reverent manner ſpeak boldly to Chriſt: It is not fit there ſhould be ſtrangeneſs betwixt *Chriſt* and his *Spouſe*; neither indeed will there be, when Chriſt hath *blown* upon her, and when ſhe is on the growing hand.

*But mark the Order.*

Firſt, Chriſt *blows*, and then the Church ſayes, *come*; Chriſt begins in love, then love draws love; Chriſt draws the Church, and ſhe runs after him.

Cant. 1. 4. *The fire of love melts more then the fire of affliction.*

Again, we may ſee here in the Church a carefulneſſe to pleaſe Chriſt; as it is the duty, ſo it is the diſpoſition of the Church of Chriſt to pleaſe her Husband.

*Reaſon* 1. The Reaſon is, Firſt, our happineſſe ſtands in his contentment, and all cannot but be well in that houſe, where the husband and the wife delight in, and make much of each other.

2. And again, after that the Church hath denyed her ſelf and the vanities of the world, entring into a way and courſe of mortification, whom elſe hath ſhe to give her ſelf to, or receive contentment from? Our manner is to ſtudy to pleaſe men whom we

SERM. I.

we hope to riſe by, being carefull that all we doe may be well taken of them: as for Chriſt, we put him off with any thing: If he likes it, ſo it is, if not, it is the beſt that he is like to have.

1. O let us take the Apoſtles counſell, Coloſſ. 1. 9. *To labour to walk worthy of the Lord, &c. unto all well-pleaſing, increaſing in knowledge, and fruitfulneſs in every good work.* And this knowledge muſt not onely be a general wiſdome in knowing truths, but a ſpeciall underſtanding of his good will to us, and our ſpeciall duties again to him. Col. 1. 9, 10.

2. Again, that we may pleaſe Chriſt the better, labour to be cleanſed from that which is offenſive to him: let the ſpring be clean. Therefore the *Pſalmiſt* deſiring that the words of his mouth, and the meditations of his heart might be acceptable before God, firſt begs *cleanſing from his ſecret ſins.* Pſal. 19. 12.

3. And ſtill we muſt remember, that he himſelf muſt work in us whatſoever is wel-pleaſing in his ſight, that ſo we may be perfect in every good thing to do his will, having grace whereby we may ſerve him acceptably. And one prevailing argument with him is, that we deſire to be ſuch as he may take delight in; *The upright are his delight.* It cannot but pleaſe him when we deſire grace for this end, that we may pleaſe him. If we ſtudy to pleaſe men in whom there is but little good; ſhould we not much more ſtudy to pleaſe Chriſt the fountain of goodneſs? Labour therefore to be ſpiritual: for *to be carnally minded is death*; and, *thoſe that are in the fleſh cannot pleaſe God.* Rom. 8. 6.

*Obſerv.* *The* Church *deſires* Chriſt *to come into his garden, to eat his pleaſant fruits.* Where we ſee *The Church*

SERM. I. *Church gives all to Chriſt*: The *Garden* is his, the *Fruit* his, the *pleaſantneſſe* and *precious-neſſe* of the *fruit* is his. And as the fruits pleaſe him, ſo the humble acknowledgment that they come from him, doth exceedingly pleaſe him. It is enough for us to have the comfort, let him have the glory. It came
2 Chron. from a good Spirit in *David* when he ſaid, *of thine own Lord I give thee, &c.* God accounts the works and fruits that come from us to be ours, becauſe the judgment and reſolution of will, whereby we do them is ours. This he doth to encourage us; but becauſe the grace whereby we judg and will aright, comes from God, it is our duty to aſcribe whatſoever is good in us, or comes from us, unto him: ſo God ſhall loſe no praiſe, and we loſe no encouragement. The imperfections in well-doing are only ours, and thoſe Chriſt will pardon, as knowing how to bear with the infirmities of his Spouſe being *the weaker veſſell.*

*Uſe.* This therefore ſhould chear up our ſpirits in the wants and blemiſhes of our performances. They are notwithſtanding precious fruits in Chriſts acceptance, ſo that we deſire to pleaſe him above all things, and to have nearer communion with him: *fruitfulneſſe unto pleaſingneſſe may ſtand with imperfections*, ſo that we be ſenſible of them, and aſhamed for them. Although the fruit be little, yet it is precious, there is a bleſſing in it. Imperfections help us againſt tentations to pride, not to be matter of diſcouragement, which Satan aims at. And as Chriſt commands the *North* and *South-wind* to *blow* for cheriſhing: ſo Satan labours to ſtirre up an *Eaſt* pinching *wind*, to take either from endeavor, or to

to make us heartleſſe in endeavour. Why ſhould we think baſely of that which Chriſt thinks precious? Why ſhould we think that offenſive which he counts as incenſe? We muſt not give falſe witneſſe of the work of grace in our hearts, but bleſſe God that he will work any thing in ſuch polluted hearts as ours. What though as they come from us, they have a relliſh of the old man, ſeeing he takes them from us, *and perfumes them with his own ſweet odours*, ſo preſents them unto God. He is our *High-Prieſt*, which makes all acceptable, both *Perſons*, *Prayers*, and *Performances*, ſprinkling them all with his blood. Rev. 8. 3. Heb. 9. 13.

To conclude this Point, let it be our ſtudy to be in ſuch a condition wherein we may pleaſe Chriſt; and whereas we are daily prone to offend him, let us daily renew our covenant with him, and in him; and fetch encouragements of wel-doing from this, that what we do, is not onely wel-pleaſing unto him, but rewarded of him. And to this end deſire him, that he would give command to *North* and *South*, to all ſort of meanes to be effectual for making us more fruitfull, that he may delight in us as his pleaſant *Gardens*; and then what is in the world, that we need much care for, or fear?

Now upon the *Churches invitation* for *Chriſt* to come into his *Garden*, follows his gracious anſwer unto the *Churches deſire*, in the firſt verſe of this fifth Chapter.

CANT. V. I.

*I am come into my Garden, my Siſter, my Spouſe, I have gathered my myrrhe with my ſpice: I have eaten my honey-comb with my honey: I have drunk my wine with*

SERM. I.

*with my milk; eat O friends; drink, yea drink abundantly, O Beloved.*

Which words contain in them,

*An anſwer to the Deſire of the Church, in the latter part of the* Verſe *formerly handled: Awake thou North-wind, and come thou South, &c.*

Then *Verſ.* 2. is ſet forth, *The ſecure eſtate of the Church* at this time, *I ſleep, but my heart waketh*; in ſetting down whereof, the Holy Ghoſt here by *Solomon* ſhews likewiſe,

*The loving intercourſe betwixt Chriſt and the Church one with another.*

Now Chriſt upon the ſecure eſtate and condition of the Church deſires her, *To open unto him, v.* 2. Which deſire and waiting of Chriſt is put off and ſlighted with poor and ſlender excuſes, *ver.* 3. *I have put off my coat, how ſhall I put it on, &c.*

The ſucceſſe of which excuſes is, that Chriſt ſeems to go away from her (and indeed to her ſight and ſenſe departs): *Ver.* 6. *I opened unto Beloved, but my Beloved had withdrawn himſelf, &c.* Whereupon ſhe layes about her, is reſtleſs, and enquires after Chriſt from the *Watchmen*, who miſuſe, *wound her, and take away her vail from her*, Ver. 7.

Another intercouſe in this Chapter here is, That the Church *for all this gives not over ſearching after Chriſt*; but asks the *Daughters of Jeruſalem* what was become of her *Beloved*, *ver.* 8. and withall in a few words, but full of large expreſſion, ſhe relates her caſe unto them, That *ſhe was ſick of love*; and ſo *chargeth them to tell her Beloved, if they find him.* Whereupon a queſtion is moved by them touching *her Beloved*, Verſ. 9. *What is thy Beloved*

*more*

*more than another Beloved?* She takes occaſion (being full of love) which is glad of all occaſions to ſpeak of her Beloved, to burſt forth into his *Praiſes*, by many elegant expreſſions, *v.* 10, 11, 12, &c.

1. *In generall*, ſetting him at a large diſtance, beyond compariſon from all others, to be *The chiefeſt of ten thouſand*, *ver.* 10.
2. *In particular*, Verſ. 11, &c. *His head is as moſt fine gold, &c.*

The *iſſue* whereof was, That *the Daughters of Jeruſalem* became likewiſe enamoured with him, chap. 6. 1. and thereupon alſo enquire after him: *Whither is thy Beloved gone, O thou faireſt among women, &c.* Unto which demand the *Church* makes anſwer, chap. 6. 2. and ſo verſ. 3. of that chapter, makes a confident triumphant cloſe unto all theſe grand paſſages foreſaid. *I am my Beloveds, and my beloved is mine, &c.* All which will better appear in the particulars themſelves.

The firſt thing then which offereth it ſelf to our conſideration is, *Chriſts anſwer to the Churches invitation*, chap. 4, 16.

*I am come into my Garden, my Siſter, my Spouſe, I have gathered my myrrhe with my ſpice, I have eaten my honey-comb with my honey, I have drunk my wine with my milk: Eat O friends, drink, yea drink abundantly, O Beloved.* In which verſe we have,

1. *Chriſts* anſwer to the *Churches* petition [*I am come into my Garden.*]
2. A compellation or deſcription of the *Church* [*My Siſter, my Spouſe.*]
3. *Chriſts* acceptation of what he had gotten there, [*I have gathered my myrrhe with my ſpice*,

SERM. I.

*ſpice; I have eaten my honey-combe with my honey.*]

4. There is an invitation of all *Chriſts* friends to a magnifique abundant feaſt, [ *Eat O friends, drink, yea drink abundantly, O Beloved.* ]

For the firſt then, in that Chriſt makes ſuch a real anſwer unto the Churches invitation, *I am come into my Garden, &c.* we ſee, That Chriſt comes into his *garden.* 'Tis much that he that hath heaven to delight in, will delight to dwell among the ſons of ſinfull men; but this he doth for us, and ſo takes notice of the Churches Petition.

*Let my Beloved come into his Garden, and eat his pleaſant fruit.* The right ſpeech of the Church that gives all to Chriſt, who when ſhe hath made ſuch a Petition, hears it. The Order is this:

*The Order of Gods hearing his Church.*

Firſt of all, God makes his Church lovely, planteth good things therein, and then ſtirs up in her good deſires; both fitneſs to pray from an inward gracious diſpoſition and holy deſires: after which Chriſt hearing the voice of his own Spirit in her, and regarding his own preparations, he anſwers them graciouſly. Whence, in the firſt place we may obſerve, That,

*Obſerv.*

*Gods make us good, ſtirs up holy deſires in us, and then anſwers the deſires of his holy Spirit in us.*

*How the heart is prepared to prayer.*

A notable place we have for this, *Pſal.* 10. 17. which ſhews how God firſt prepares the heart to pray, and then hears theſe deſires of the ſoul ſtirred up by his own Spirit, *Lord, thou haſt heard the deſires of the humble*; none are fit to pray but the humble, ſuch as diſcern their own wants: *Thou wilt prepare their hearts, thou wilt make thine ear to hear.* So *Rom.* 8. 26.

SERM. I.

8. 26. it is ſaid, *Likewiſe the Spirit alſo helpeth our infirmities; for, we know not what we ſhould pray for as we ought, but the Spirit it ſelf maketh interceſſion for us with groanings which cannot be uttered.* Thus the Spirit not onely ſtirs up our heart to pray, but alſo prepares our hearts unto it. Eſpecially this is neceſſary for us, when our thoughts are confuſed with trouble, grief, and paſſions, not knowing what to pray. In this caſe the Spirit dictates the words of prayer, or els in a confuſion of thoughts ſums up all in a volley of ſighs and unexpreſſible groans. Thus it is true, that our hearts can neither be lifted up to Prayer, nor rightly prepared for it, in any frame fitting, but by Gods own Spirit. Nothing is accepted of God toward heaven and happineſs, but that which is ſpiritual; all ſaving and ſanctifying good comes from above: Therefore God muſt prepare the heart, ſtir up holy deſires, dictate prayer, muſt do all in all, being our *Alpha* and *Omega*. Rev. 1. 6.

Now, *God hears our prayers*: Firſt, *becauſe the Materials of theſe holy deſires are good in themſelves, and from the Perſon from whence they come, his Beloved Spouſe*, as it is, *Cant.* 2. 14. where *Chriſt* deſiring to hear the voice of his *Church*, ſaith, *Let me ſee thy countenance, and let me hear thy voice; for ſweet is thy voice, and thy countenance is comely.* Thus the voice of the *Spouſe* is ſweet, becauſe it is ſtirred up by his own Spirit, which burns the *Incenſe*: and whence all comes which is ſavingly good. This offering up of our prayers in the name of Chriſt, is that which with his ſweet odours perfumes all our *Sacrifices* and *Prayers*, becauſe being in the Covenant of Grace, God reſpects whatſoever comes Rev. 8. 3. from

*Why God hears our prayers.*

*Reaſon* 1.

SERM. I. 2.

from us, as we do the desires of our near friends.

And then again, God hears our Prayers, *Because he looks upon us as we are in election and choise of God the Father who hath given us to him.* Not onely as in the near bond of marriage, husband and wife; but also as he hath given us to Christ, which is his plea unto the Father, *Joh.* 17. 6. *Thine they were, thou gavest them me, &c.* The desires of the *Church* please him, because they are stirred up by his Spirit, and proceed from her that is his: whose voice he delights to hear, and the prayers of others for his Church are accepted, because they are for her that is his Beloved.

To confirm this further, see *Isa.* 58. 9. *Thou then shalt cry, and the Lord shall answer; thou shalt call, and presently he shall say, Here I am, &c.* so as soon as *Daniel* had ended that excellent prayer, the Angel telleth him, *At the beginning of thy supplications the decree came forth, &c.* So because he knows what to put into our hearts, he knows our desires and thoughts. And therefore accepts of our prayers and hears us; because he loves the voice of his own Spirit in us. So it is said, *He fulfills the desires of them that fear him; and he is neare to all that call upon him, to all that call upon him in truth.* And our Saviour he saith, *Ask and ye shall receive, &c.* So we have it, 1 *Joh.* 5. 14. *And we know if we ask any thing according to his will, he heareth us.*

Dan. 9. 23.

Cant. 2. 14.

Psal. 145. 18.

Mat. 7. 7.

*Use* 1.

Let it therefore be a singular comfort to us, that in all wants, so in that of friends, when we have none to go to, yet we have God to whom we may freely pour out our hearts, there being no place in the world that can restrain us from his presence, or his

his Spirit from us, he can hear us and help us in all places. What a bleſſed eſtate is this? None can hinder us from driving this trade with Chriſt in Heaven. SERM. I.

And let us make another uſe of it likewiſe, to be a means to ſtirre up our hearts, *to make uſe of our priviledges*. What a prerogative is it for a favorite to have the ear of his Prince? him we account happy: ſurely he is much more happy that hath Gods ear, him to be his Father in the covenant of grace: Him reconciled, upon all occaſions to pour out his heart before him, who is *mercifull* and *faithfull*, *wiſe* and *moſt able* to help us. *Why are we diſcouraged therefore? and why are we caſt down?* when we have ſuch a powerfull, and ſuch a gracious God to go to in all our extremities. He that can pray, can never be much uncomfortable. *Uſe* 2. Pſal. 42. ult.

So like wiſe it ſhonld ſtir us up to keep our peace with God, that ſo we may always have acceſſe unto him, and communion with him. What a pitifull caſe is it to loſe other comforts, and therewith alſo to be in ſuch a ſtate; that we cannot go to God with any boldneſſe? it is the greateſt loſſe of all when we have loſt the Spirit of Prayer. For if wee loſe other things, we may recover them by Prayer. But when we have loſt this boldneſs to go to God, and are afraid to look him in the face (as malefactors the Judge) this is a wofull eſtate. *Uſe* 3. *The greateſt loſſe of all.*

Now there are *divers caſes wherein the ſoul is not in a ſtate fit for Prayer*. As that firſt, Pſal 66. 18. *If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not regard my prayer*. If a man hath a naughty heart, that purpoſeth to live in any ſin againſt God, hee takes *Caſes wherein one is unfit to pray.* 1

SERM. I.

takes him for an enemy, and therefore will not regard his Prayer. Therefore we muſt come with a reſolute purpoſe to break off all ſinfull courſes, and to give up our ſelves to the guidance of Gods Spirit. And this will be a forcible reaſon to move us thereunto, becauſe ſo long as we live in any known ſin unrepented of, God neither regards us nor our prayers. What a fearfull eſtate is this, that when we have ſuch need of Gods favour in all eſtates, in ſickneſſe, the hour of death, and in ſpirituall temptation, to be in ſuch a condition as that we dare not go to God? Though our lives be civil, yet if we have falſe hearts that feed themſelves with evill imaginations, and with a purpoſe of ſinning (though we act it not) the Lord will not regard the prayers of ſuch an one, they are abominable, *(The very ſacrifice of the wicked is abominable.)*

*A ſtrong motive to ſanctification.*

Prov. 13.

2.

Another caſe is, *when we will not forgive others.* We know it is directly ſet down in the Lords Prayer: *Forgive us our treſpaſſes, as we forgive them that treſpaſſe againſt us*; and there is further added, v. 15. *if you forgive not men their treſpaſſes, neither will your heavenly Father forgive you.* If our hearts tell us, we have no diſpoſition to pardon, be at peace and agreement, then we do but take Gods name in vain, when we ask him to forgive our ſins, and we continue in envie and malice. In this caſe God will not regard our prayers, as it is ſaid, I care not for your prayers, or for any ſervice you performe to me: why? *For your hands are full of blood*: you are unmercifull, of a cruell fierce diſpoſition, which cannot appear before God rightly, nor humble it ſelf in prayer: If it doth, its own bloody

Matth. 6. 12.

Iſa. 1.
Iſa. 66.

SERM. I.

bloody and cruell diſpoſition will be objected againſt the prayers which are not mingled with *faith* and *love*, but with *wrath* and *bitterneſſe*. Shall I look for mercy that have no mercifull heart my ſelf? Can I hope to find that of God, that others cannot find from me? An unbroken diſpoſition, which counts *Pride* an ornament, that is cruell and fierce, it cannot go to God in prayer: For whoſoever would prevail with God in prayer, muſt be humble; for *our ſupplications muſt come from a loving peaceable diſpoſition where there is a reſolution againſt all ſin.* Neither is it ſufficient to avoid *grudging* and *malice* againſt theſe; but we muſt look that others have not cauſe to grudge againſt us, as it is comanded, *Mat.* 5. 23. *If thou bring thy gift to the altar, and there remembreſt that thy brother hath ought againſt thee, leave there thy gift before the altar, and go thy way; firſt be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift.* So that if we do not ſeek reconciliation with men unto whom we have done wrong, God will not be reconciled to us, nor accept any ſervice from us.

Pſalm 37.

If then we would have our prayers and our perſons accepted, or reſpected, let us make conſcience of that which hath been ſaid, and not loſe ſuch a bleſſed priviledge as this is, that God may regard our prayers. But here may be asked,

*Queſt.* *How ſhall I know whether God regard my prayers or not?*

*Anſw.* 1. 2. *How to know when God hears our prayers.*

Firſt, *When he grants the thing prayed for, or enlargeth our hearts to pray ſtill.* It is a greater gift then the thing it ſelf we beg, to have a ſpirit of prayer with a heart enlarged: For as long as the

SERM. I. heart is enlarged to prayer, it is a ſign that God hath a ſpeciall regard of us, and will grant our petition in the beſt and fitteſt time.

3. When *he anſwers us in a better and higher kind*, as *Paul* when he prayed for the taking away of the prick of the fleſh, had promiſes of ſufficient grace.

4. When again, *He gives us inward peace, thongh he gives not the thing*: as *Phil.* 4. 7. *In nothing he carefull, but in all things let your requeſts be made to God with prayer and thankſgiving.*

*Queſt.* *But ſometimes he doth not anſwer our requeſts.*

*Anſw.* It is true he doth not, but *the peace of God which paſſeth all underſtanding guards our hearts & minds in the knowledge and love of God.* So though he anſwers not our prayers in particular, yet he vouchſafes inward peace unto us, aſſuring us that it ſhall go well with us, though not in that particular we beg. And thus in not hearing their prayers, yet they have their hearts deſire, when Gods will is made known. Is not this ſufficient for a Chriſtian, either to have the thing, or to have inward peace, with aſſurance that it ſhall go better with them, then if they had it; with a ſpirit enlarged to pray, till they have the thing prayed for? If any of theſe be, God reſpects our prayers.

Again in that Chriſt is thus ready to come unto *his Garden* upon the *Churches invitation*, wee may further obſerve, That

*Obſerv.* *Chriſt vouchſafes his gracious preſence to his children upon their deſire of it.*

The Point is cle ar, from the beginning of the world, the Church hath had the preſence of *Chriſt* alway: For, either he hath been preſent in *Sacrifices*, or

SERM. I.

or in ſome other things, *ſigns of his preſence*, as in the *Buſh*, or ſome more glorious manifeſtation of his preſence, the *Ark*, and in the *Cloud* and *Pillar of fire*, and after that more gloriouſly in the *Temple*: he hath ever been preſent with his Church in ſome ſign or evidence of his preſence, he delighted to be with the children of men. Sometimes before that, ſometimes he aſſumed a body, and afterward laid it down again, untill he came indeed to take our nature upon him never to leave it again. But here is meant, *a ſpiritual preſence moſt of all*; which the Church in ſome ſort ever had, now deſires, and he offers, as being *a God hearing prayer*. And to inſtance in one place for all, to ſee how ready Chriſt hath always bin to ſhew his preſence to the Church upon their deſire. What elſe is the *burden* of the 107 *Pſalm*, but a repetition of Gods readineſſe to ſhew his preſence in the Church, upon their ſeeking unto him, and unfained deſire of it, notwithſtanding all their manifold provocations of him to anger? which is well ſummed up, *Pſal.* 106.43. *Many times did he deliver them, but they provoked him with their counſell, and were brought low for their iniquity. Nevertheleſſe he regarded their affliction when he heard their cry,*

Exod. 3.2.
Exod. 25.22.
Exod. 13.21.

Pſalm 65.2.

It doth not content the Church to have a kind of ſpirituall preſence of Chriſt; but *it is carryed from deſire to deſire*, till the whole deſire be accompliſhed: for, *as there are graduall Ipreſences of Chriſt, ſo there are ſuitable deſires in the Church which riſe by degrees*. Chriſt was preſent, 1. By his gracious Spirit. And then, 2. more graciouſly preſent in his *incarnation*, the ſweeteſt time that ever the Church had

*That the Church is carryed from deſire to deſire.*

SERM. I.

had from the beginning of the world untill then. It being *the desire of nations*; for the description of those who lived before his coming, is from *the waiting for the consolation of Israel*, that is, for the first coming of Christ. And then there is a third and more glorious presence of Christ, that all of us wait for, whereby we are described to be such, as *wait for the coming of Christ*; for the soul of a Christian is never satisfied untill it enjoy the highest desire of Christs presence, which the Church knew well enough must follow in time. Therefore she especially desires this spirituall presence in a larger and fuller measure, which she in some measure already had. So then Christ is graciously present in his Church by his holy Spirit. *I will be with you* (saith he) *unto the end of the world.* It is his promise, when I am gone my self, *I will not leave you comfortlesse*, but leave with you my *Vicar-generall* (the *holy Spirit*, the *Comforter*) who shall be alway with you. But,

Matth. 28.

John 16.

*Quest.* *How shall we know that Christ is present in us?*

*Answ.* 1. *How to know that Christ is present in us.*

To know this, we shall not need to pull him from heaven, we may know it in the *Word* and *Sacraments*, and in the *communion of Saints*; for these are the conveyances whereby he manifests himself, together with the work of his own gracious Spirit in us; for as we need not take the *Sun* from Heaven, to know wether or not it be up, or be day, which may be known by the light, heat, and fruitfulnesse of the creature: And as in the *Spring*, we need not look to the heaven to see whether the *Sun* be come near us or not; for looking on the *Earth*, we may see all green, fresh, lively, strong and vigorous: So it is

is with the preſence of Chriſt, we may know he is preſent, by that light which is in the ſoul, convincing us of better courſes to be taken of a ſpirituall life, to know heavenly things, and the difference of them from earthly, and to ſet a price upon them. When there is together with *light*, a heat above nature, the affections are kindled to love the beſt things, and to joy in them.

And when together with *heat there is ſtrength and vigor to carry us to ſpiritual duties*, framing us to a holy communion with God, and one with another.

And likewiſe, when *there is every way cheerfulneſs and enlargment of Spirit*; as it is with the creature when the *Sun approcheth*. For theſe cauſes the Church deſires Chriſt, that ſhe may have more light, life, heat, vigor, ſtrength, and that ſhe may be more cheerfull and fruitfull in duties. The ſoul when it is once made ſpirituall, doth ſtill deſire a further and further preſence of Chriſt to be made better and better.

What a comfort is this to Chriſtians, that they have the preſence of Chriſt ſo far forth as ſhall make them happy, and as the earth will afford? *Nothing but heaven* (or rather *Chriſt in heaven*) it ſelf *will content the child of God*. In the mean time his preſence in the congregation makes their ſouls as it were heaven. If the Kings preſence, who carries the Court with him, makes all places where he is a Court: So *Chriſt he carries a kind of heaven with him whereſoever he is, his preſence hath with it life, light, comfort, ſtrength and all.* For one beam of his countenance will ſcatter all the clouds of griefe

*That where Chriſt is preſent there heaven is in ſome degrees*

SERM. I.

Dan. 3.

Acts 15. 52.

Acts 5. 41.

*That having Christs presence wee need fear nothing.*

whatsoever. It is no matter where we be, so Christ be with us. If with the three children in a fiery furnace, it is no matter, *if a fourth be there also.* So, If Christ be with us, the flames nor nothing shall hurt us. If in a dungeon, as *Paul* and *Sylas* were; if Christs presence be there by his Spirit to enlarge our souls, all is comfortable whatsoever. It changeth the nature of all things, sweetneth every thing, besides that sweetnesse which it brings unto the soul, by the presence of the Spirit, as wee see in the *Acts*, *when they had received the holy Ghost more abundantly*, they cared not what they suffered, regarded not whipping; nay, *were glad that they were accounted worthy to suffer any thing for Christ.* Whence came this fortitude? from the presence of Christ, and the *Comforter* which he had formerly promised.

So let us have the Spirit of Christ that comes from him, then it is no matter what our condition be in the world: upon this ground let us fear nothing that shall befall us in Gods cause, whatsoever it is: We shall have a spirit of prayer at the worst. God never takes away the spirit of supplication from his children, but leaves them that, untill at length he possesse them fully of their desires. In all *Christs delays*, let us look unto the *Cause*, and to our *Carriage* therein: Renew our *Repentance*, that we may be in a fit state to go to God, and God to come to us. Desire him to fit us for prayer and holy communion with him, that we may never doubt of his presence.

THE

# The ſecond Sermon.

CANT. V. I.

*I am come into my Garden, my Siſter, my Spouſe: I have gathered my Myrrhe with my Spice: I have gathered my honey-combe with my honey: I have drunk my wine with my milk: Eat O friends, drink, yea drink abundantly, O Beloved!*

THis ſong is a mirror of Chriſts love, a diſcovery of which we have in part in this verſe. Wherein Chriſt accepts of the invitation of the Church, and comes into his Garden; and he entertains her with the termes of *Siſter* and *Spouſe*. Herein obſerve the deſcription of the Church, and the ſweet compellation [*My Siſter, my Spouſe,*] Where there is both affinity and conſanguinity, all the bonds that may tye us to Chriſt, and Chriſt to us.

1. *His Siſter, by blood.*
2. *His Spouſe, by marriage.*

Chriſt is our Brother, and the Church and every particular true member thereof is *his ſiſter*. I go (ſaith *Chriſt*) *to my Father and to your Father, to my God and to your God. Goe* (ſaith he) and *tell my Brethren*; this was after his reſurrection; his advancement did not change his diſpoſition: Go tell my brethren that left me ſo unkindly go tell *Peter* that was moſt unkind of all, and moſt caſt down with the ſenſe of it. He became our Brother by Incarnation: John 20. 17.

SERM. II.

carnation: For all our union is from the first union of two natures in one person. Christ became *bone of our bone, and flesh of our flesh*; to make us spiritually bone of his bone, and flesh of his flesh.

Isa. 7. 14.
2 Pet. 1. 4.

Therefore, let *us labor to be like to him*, who for that purpose became like to us, *Immanuel*, God with us, that we might be like him, *and partake of the divine Nature*: Whom should we rather desire to be like, then one so great, so gracious, so loving?

Again, *Christ was not ashamed to call us Brethren*, nor *abhorred the Virgins wombe*, to be shut up in those dark cels and straits; but took our base nature, when it was at the worst and not only our nature, but our miserable condition and curse due unto us. Was not he ashamed of us, and shall we be ashamed to own him and his cause? Against this cowardise it is a thunderbolt which our Saviour *Christ* pronounceth: *He that is ashamed of me before men, him will I be ashamed of before my Father, and all the holy Angels.* It argues a base disposition, either for frown or favour to desert a good cause in evill times.

Mark 8. 38.

Again, *It is a point of comfort to know that we have a Brother, who is a favourite in Heaven*, who though he abased himself for us, is yet Lord over all. Unless he had been our brother, he could not have been our Husband, for Husband and wife should be of one nature. That he might marry us, therefore he came, and took our nature, so to be fitted to fulfill the work of our Redemption. But now he is in heaven, set down at the right hand of God, the true *Ioseph*, the high Steward of heaven, he hath all power committed unto him, he rules all.

What

What a comfort is this to a poor soul that hath no friends in the world, that yet he hath a friend in heaven, that will own him for his Brother, in, and through whom he may goe to the Throne of grace boldly, and pour out his soul? What a comfort was it to *Iosephs* brethren, that their brother was the second person in the kingdome? Heb. 4. 15, 16.

Again, *It should be a motive to have good Christians in high estimation, and take heed how wee wrong them,* for their brother will take their part: *Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?* saith the Head in Heaven, when his members were trodden on upon earth. It is more to wrong a Christian, then the the world takes it for; for Christ takes it as done to himself. *Absolom* was a man wicked and unnaturall, yet he could not endure the wrong that was done to his sister *Thamar*. *Iacobs* sons took it as an high dignity, that their sister should be so abused. Hath Christ no affections, now he is in heaven, to her that is so near him as the Church is? howsoever he suffer men to tyrannize over her for a while, yet it will appear e're long that he will take the Churches part; for he is our brother. Acts 9. 4.

*My Sister, my Spouse.*

The *Church is the Daughter of a King*, begotten of God; *the Sister and Spouse of a King*, because she is the *Sister* and *Spouse* of *Christ*, and the Mother of all that are spirituall Kings; the Church of Christ is every way royal. Therefore *we are Kings, because we are Christians*. Hence the holy Ghost doth add here to *Sister*, *Spouse*: indeed taking the advantage of such Relations as are most comfortable, to set out the excellent and transcendent Relation *The Churches royall descent.*

SERM. II.

Relation that is between Christ and his Church. all other are not what they are termed, so much as glasses to see better things. *Riches, Beauty, Marriage, Nobility, &c.* are scarce worthy of their names; these are but titles and empty things, though our base nature make great matters of them; yet *the reality and substance of all these are in heavenly things.* True *Riches* are the heavenly *Graces*, true *Nobility*, is to be *born of God*, to be the *Sister and Spouse* of Christ. True *Pleasures are those of the Spirit*, which endure for ever, and will stand by us, when all outward comforts will vanish. That mystical union and sweet communion is set down with such variety of expressions, to shew *that whatsoever is scattered in the creature severally, is in him intirely.* He is both a *Friend* and a *Brother*, a *Head* and a *Husband* to us, therefore he takes the names of all: Whence we may observe further,

*Why the variety of Christs love to the Church is so diversly expressed.*

*Observ.* That, *the Spouse is the Church of Christ.* It springs out of him; even as *Eve* taken out of *Adams* rib, so the *(Spouse* of *Christ)* was taken out of his side (when it was peirced) the Church rose out of his blood and death; for he redeemed it by satisfying Divine justice: we being in such a condition, that Christ must redeem us, before he could wed us. First, he must be incarnate in our Nature, before he could be a fit husband: and then, because we were in bondage & captivity, we must be redeemed before he could marry us, *he purchased his Church with his own blood.* *Christ* hath right to us, he bought us dearly.

Acts 20. 28.

Again, *another foundation of this Marriage* between Christ and us, is *Consent*: he works us by his

his Spirit to yield to him, there must be consent on our part, which is not in us by nature, but wrought by his spirit, &c. We yield to take him *upon his one termes*; that is, that we shall leave our fathers house, all our former carnall acquaintance, when he hath wrought our consent, then the marriage between him and us is struck up.

*How Christ must be taken of us.*

Some few resemblances will make the consideration of this the more comfortable, 1 The *Husband takes his wife under his own name*, she losing her own name is called by his. So we are called Christians of *Christ*. 2 *The wife is taken with all her debt, and made partaker of the honors and riches of her husband.* Whatsoever he hath is hers, and he stands answerable for all her debts: so it is here, we have not only the name of Christ upon us, but we partake of his honors, and are *Kings*, *Priests*, and *Heirs* with him. Whatsoever he hath, he hath taken us into the fellowship of it; so that his Riches are ours, and likewise whatsoever is ours that is ill, he hath taken it upon him, even the wrath due to us; for he came between that and us, when he was made sin, and a curse for us: so there is a blessed changd between Christ and us; his Honors and Riches are ours: We have nothing to bestow on him but our beggery sins, and miseries, which he took upon him.

1.

2.

Rev. 1. 5, 6.

1 Cor. 5. 21.

*Those that bring together these two differenl parties are the friends of the Bride*; that is, the Ministers, as it is, *Ioh.* 3. 23. They are the *paranimphi* the friends of the Bride, that learn of *Christ* what to report to his *Spouse*; and so they wooe for *Christ*, and open the Riches, Beauty, Honor, and all that is lovely

3.

*The duty of Ministers.*

SERM. II.

lovely in him, which is indeed the speciall duty of Ministers, to lay open his unsearchable riches, that the Church may know what a husband she is like to have, if she cleave to him; and what an one she leaves, if she forsakes him. It was well said in the Councell of *Basil* out of *Bernard*, *Nemo committit Sponsam suam Vicario, nemo enim Ecclesia Sponsus est*: None commits his wife to a Vicar, for none is the Husband of the Church. To be Husband of the Church is one of the incommunicable Titles of *Christ*, yet usurped by the Pope. *Innocent* the Third was the first that wronged Christs bed by challenging the Title of *Sponsus*, Husband of the Church. *Bernard* forbids his Scholar *Eugenius* this title, *Epist.* 237. *ad Eugenium.* It is enough for Ministers to be friends of the Bride. Let us yield him to be Husband of the Church, that hath given himself to sanctifie it with washing of water and blood, *Eph.*5.26. We are a wife of blood to him.

In this sweet conjunction, we must know, *that by nature we are clean otherwise then Spouses*; for what was *Solomons* wife, *Pharaohs* daughter? a Heathen till she came to be *Solomons* Spouse: And as we read in *Moses*, the strange woman must have *her hair cut off, and her nails pared*, before she should be taken into the Church, there must be an alteration: so before the Church (which is not *heathenish*, but indeed *hellish* by nature, and led by the spirit of the world) be fit to be the Spouse of Christ, there must be an alteration and a change of nature; Christ must alter, renew, purge and fit us for himself: the Apostle saith, *Eph.* 5.16. It was the end of his death, not only to take us to heaven, but to

Isa.11.7,8. Iohn 3.3.

sanctifie

SERM. II.

sanctifie us on earth, and prepare us that we might be fit *Spouses* for himself.

*Use 1.*

*Let us oft think of this nearnesse between Christ and us,* if we have once given our names to him, and not be discouraged for any sin or unworthinesse in us. *Who sue for a debt when she is marryed?* Therefore answer all accusations thus: Go to *Christ*; if you have any thing to say to me, go to my husband; *God is just, but he will not have his justice twice satisfied, seeing whatsoever is due thereunto, is satisfied by Christ our Husband.* What a comfort is this to a distressed conscience? if sin cannot dismay us, which is the ill of ills, and cause of all evill, what other ill can dismay us? He that exhorts us to bear with the infirmities one of another, and hath enjoyned the husband to bear with the wife *(as the weaker vessell)* will not he bear with his Church (as the weaker vessel) performing the duty of an husband in all our infirmities?

*Consolation.*

*uxori lis non intenditur.*

1 Pet. 3.7.

Again, his desire is to make her better, and not to cast her away for that which is amisse. And for *outward ills,* they are but to refine and make us more conformable to Christ our Husband, to fit us for heaven, the same way that he went. *They have ablessing in them all,* for he takes away all that is hurtfull, he pities and keeps us *as the apple of his eye.* Therefore let us often think of this, since he hath vouchsafed to take us so near to himself. Ler us not lose the comfort that this meditation will yield us. We love for goodnesse, beauty, riches, but Christ loves us to make us so, and then loves us because we are so in all estates whatsoever.

Zach. 2.8.

*Use 3.*

And *if Christ be so near us, let us labour for chaste judge-*

SERM. II.

*Veritas est sponsa intellectus.*

*judgments*, that we do not defile them with errors, seeing the whole soul is espoused to Christ. Truth is the Spouse of our understandings; it is not left to us to be wanton in opinions, to take up what conceit we will of things: so we ought to have chaste affections, not cleaving to base things: It hath been oft times seen that one husband hath had many wives; but never from the beginning of the world, that one wife hath had many husbands. *God* promiseth to betroth his Church to him in righteousnesse and faithfulnesse; that is, as he will be faithfull to her, so she shall by his grace be faithfull to him; faithfulnesse shall be mutuall, the Church shall not be false to Christ: so there is no Christian soul must think to have many husbands, for Christ in this case is a jealous husband. Take heed therfore of spirituall harlottry of heart, for our affections are for Christ, and cannot be better bestowed. In other things we lose our love, and the things loved, but here we lose not our love; but this is a perfecting love, which draws us to love that which is better then our selves. We *are as we affect, our affections are as their objects be*: If they be set upon better things then our selves, they are bettered by it, they are never rightly bestowed but when they are set upon Christ and upon other things as they answer and stand with the love of Christ. For *the prime love, when it is rightly bestowed, it orders and regulates all other loves whatsoever.* No man knowes how to use earthly things, but a Christian that hath first pitched his love on Christ, then seeing all things in him, and in all them a beam of that love of his, intending happinesse to him, so he knows how

*That our affections are like their objects*

how to uſe every thing in order. Therefore let us keep our Communion with Chriſt, and eſteeme nothing more then his love, becauſe he eſteems nothing more then ours.

*But how ſhall we know whether we be eſpouſed to Chriſt or not?* Queſt.

Our hearts can tell us, whether we yield conſent to him or not. In particular, whether we have received him as he will be received, as a right huſband; that is, *Whether we have received him to be ruled by him*, to make him our Head. For the wife when ſhe yields to be married, therewith alſo ſurrenders up her own will to be ruled by her husband; ſo far ſhe hath denyed her own will, ſhe hath no will of her own. Chriſt hath wiſedome enough for us and himſelf too, whoſe wiſedome and will muſt be ours: *To be led by divine truths ſo far as they are diſcovered unto us, and to ſubmit our ſelves thereunto, is a ſign of a gracious heart that is married to Chriſt.* Anſw. 1. *How to know if we be eſpouſed to Chriſt or not.*

Againe, *a willingneſſe to follow Chriſt in all conditions as he is diſcovered in the Word.* To ſuffer Chriſt to have the ſoveraignty in our affections, above all other things and perſons in the world. This is the right diſpoſition of a true Spouſe. For as it was at the firſt inſtitution, *there muſt be a leaving of Father and Mother, and all to cleave to the husband:* ſo here, when any thing and Chriſt cannot ſtand together, or elſe we ſhall never have the comfort of this ſweet name. Many men will be glad to own Chriſt to be great by him; (but as St. *Auſtin* complains in his time) Chriſt Ieſus is not loved for Ieſus his own ſake, but for other things that he brings with him, *peace, plenty*, &c. as far as it ſtands with 2. *The right diſpoſition of the Spouſe of Chriſt.* *Vix diligitur Jeſus propter Jeſum.*

SERM. II.

with these contentments; if Christ and the world part once, it will be known which we followed. In times of peace this is hardly discerned. If he will pay mens debts, so as they may have the credit and glory of the Name to be called Christians: If he will redeem them from the danger of sin, all is well; but *onely such have the comfort of this Communion, as love him for himself.* Let us not so much trouble our selves about signs, as be carefull to do our duty to Christ, and then will Christ discover his love clearly unto us.

*Use 4. Encouragement and direction for such as are not yet in Christ.*

Now they that are not brought so near to this happy condition by Christ, may yet have this encouragement; there is yet place of grace for them, let them therefore consider but these three things:

1. *The excellency of Christ, and of the estate of the Church, when it is so near him.*
2. *The necessity of this, to be so near him.*
3. *That there is hope of it.*

There is in Christ whatsoever may commend a Husband; birth, comelinesse, riches, friends, wisdome, authority, &c.

1. *The excellency of this condition to be one with Christ, is, that all things are ours.* For he is the *King*, and the *Church* the *Queen* of all; all things are serviceable to us: tis a wondrous nearnesse to be nearer to Christ then the Angels, who are not his body, but servants that attend upon the Church: the Bride is nearer to him then the Angels; for *he is the Head and Husband thereof, and not of the Angels.* What an excellent condition is this for poor flesh and blood that creeps up and down the earth here despised?

Heb. 2. 16.

But

But eſpecially, *if we conſider the neceſſity of it*; we are all indebted for more then we are worth; to divine juſtice we owe a debt of obedience, and in want of that we owe a debt of puniſhment, and we cannot anſwer one for a thouſand. What will become of us if we have not a husband to diſcharge all our debts, but to be impriſoned for ever? 2.

A perſon that is a ſtranger to Chriſt, though he were an *Achitophel* for his brain, a *Judas* for his profeſſion, a *Saul* for his place; yet if his ſins be ſet before him, he will be ſwallowed up of deſpair, fearing to be ſhut up eternally under Gods wrath; therefore if nothing elſe move, yet let neceſſity compell us to take Chriſt.

Conſider not onely how ſuitable and how neceſſary he is unto us, but what hope there is to have him, when as he ſueth to us by his meſſengers, and woeth us, when as we ſhould rather ſeek to him; and with other meſſengers ſendeth a privy meſſenger, his Holy Spirit, to incline our hearts: let us therefore, as we love our ſouls, ſuffer our ſelves to be won. But more of this in another place. The next Branch is. 3.

3. *Chriſts acceptation*: *I have gathered my Myrrhe with my Spice*, &c. So that together with Chriſts preſence, here is *a gracious acceptation of the proviſion of the Church, with a delight in it*; and withall, *a bringing of more with him*. The Church had a double deſire: 1. That *Chriſt* would come to accept of what ſhe had for him of his own Grace which he had wrought in her ſoul. And 2. She was alſo verily perſwaded that he would not come empty-handed, only to accept of what was there, but alſo *Chriſts acceptation.*

SERM. II.

would bring abundance of grace and comfort with him: therefore *she desires acceptation and increase*; both which desires he answers. He comes to his *Garden*, shewes his acceptation, and withall he brings more. *I have gathered my Myrrhe with my Spice: I have eaten my honey-combe with my honey: I have drunk my wine with my milk*, &c. Whence we observe,

*Observ.* *That God accepts of the Graces of his children, and delights in them.*

1. First, Because *they are the fruits that come from his Children, his Spouse, his friend*; love of the person wins acceptance of that which is presented from the person. What comes from love is lovingly taken.

2. *They are the Graces of his Spirit.* If we have any thing that is good, all comes from the Spirit, which is first in *Christ* our husband, and then in us. As the Ointment was first poured on *Aarons* head, and then ran down upon his rich Garments: so all comes from Christ to us. Saint *Paul* cals the wife *the Glory of her husband*, because (as in a glass) she resembleth the Graces of her husband, who may see his own Graces in her: so it is with Christ and the Church; face answereth to face (as *Solomon* saith in another case) Christ sees his own face, beauty, glory in his Church, she reflects his beams, he looks in love upon her, and alwayes with his looks conveys Grace and comfort; and the Church doth reflect back again his Grace. Therefore Christ loves but the reflection of his own graces in his Children, & therefore accepts them.

Phil. 1. 3.

3. His kindnesse is such as he takes all in good part, Christ is love and kindnesse it self. Why doth

doth he give unto her the name of *Spouſe* and *Siſter?* but that he would be kind and loving, and that we ſhould conceive ſo of him. We ſee then the graces of Chriſt accepting of us, and what we do in his ſtrength. Both we our ſelves are ſacrifices, and what we offer is a ſacrifice acceptable to God through him that offered himſelf as a ſacrifice of a ſweet ſmelling ſavour, from which God ſmells a ſavour of reſt. God accepts of Chriſt firſt, and then of us, and what comes from us in him. We may boldly pray, as *Pſal.* 20. 3. *Lord remember all our offerings, and accept all our ſacrifices.* The bleſſed Apoſtle Saint *Paul* doth will us, *to offer up our ſelves* an holy and acceptable ſacrifice to God, when we are once in Chriſt. In the Old Teſtament we have divers manifeſtations of this acceptation. He accepted the ſacrifice of *Abel* (as it is thought) by fire from heaven; and ſo *Eliahs* ſacrifice, and *Solomons* by fire. So in the New Teſtament he ſhewed his acceptation of the *Diſciples* meeting together, by a mighty wind, and then filling them with the holy Ghoſt. But now the declaration of the acceptation of our *Perſons, Graces,* and *Sacrifices* that we offer to him, *is moſt in peace of conſcience, and joy in the holy Ghoſt,* and from a holy fire of love kindled by the Spirit, whereby our ſacrifices are burned. In the incenſe of prayer how many ſweet ſpices are burned together by this fire of faith working by love? as humility and patience in ſubmitting to Gods will, hope of a gracious anſwer, holineſſe, love to others, &c.

Rom. 12. 1.

1 Kin. 18. 18. 1 Chron. 21. 2. Act. 2. 1.

If ſo be that God accepts the performances and graces, (eſpecially the prayers of his children;) *Uſe* 1.

SERM. II.

*Let it be an argument to encourage us to be much in all holy duties.* It would dead the heart of any man to perform ſervice where it ſhould not be accepted, and the eye turned aſide, not vouchſafing a gracious look upon it; this would be a killing of all comfortable endeavours. But when all that is good is accepted, and what is amiſſe is pardoned, when a broken deſire, a cup of cold water ſhall not go unreſpected, nay unrewarded; what can we deſire more? It is infidelity, which is diſhonourable to God, and uncomfortable to our ſelves, that makes us ſo barren and cold in duties.

*Uſe* 2. Onely let our care be to approve our hearts unto Chriſt. When our hearts are right, we cannot but think comfortably of Chriſt. Thoſe that have offended ſome great perſons, are afraid when they hear from them, becauſe they think they are in a ſtate diſpleaſing to them: So a ſoul that is under the guilt of any ſin, is ſo farr from thinking that God accepts of it, that it looks to hear nothing from him but ſome meſſage of anger and diſpleaſure. But one that preſerves acquaintance, due diſtance and reſpect to a great perſon, hears from him with comfort; before he breaks open a letter, or ſees any thing, he ſuppoſes it comes from a friend, one that loves him. So, as we would deſire to hear nothing but good news from heaven, and acceptation of all that we do, let us be carefull to preſerve our ſelves in a good eſtate, or els our ſouls will tremble upon any diſcovery of Gods wrath. The guilty conſcience argues, what can God ſhew to me, being ſuch a wretch? The heart of ſuch an one cannot but miſgive; as where peace is made it will

*The diſcourſe of a guilty conſcience.*

will ſpeak comfort. It is ſaid of *Daniel*, that he was a man of Gods deſires; and of Saint *Iohn*, that Chriſt ſo loved him that he leaned on his breaſt. Every one cannot be a *Daniel*, nor one that leans on Chriſts boſome. There are degrees of favour and love; but there is no child of God, but he is beloved and accepted of him in ſome degree. But ſomething of this before in the former chapter.

*I have gathered my Myrrhe with my Spice; I have eaten my hony-combe with my honey, &c.*

That is, I have taken contentment in thy Graces; together with acceptation, there is a delight, and *God not onely accepts, but he delights in the graces of his children.* All my delight (ſaith *David*) is in thoſe that are excellent; but this is not all, Chriſt comes with an enlargement of what he findes.

Chriſt comes, and comes not empty whenſoever he comes, but with abundance of Grace. If Saint *Paul* (who was but Chriſts inſtrument) could tell the *Romans*, *I hope to come to you in abundance of grace and comfort*, becauſe he was a bleſſed inſtrument to convey good from Chriſt to the people of God, as a conduit-pipe; how much more ſhall Chriſt himſelf, where he is preſent, come with graces and comfort? Thoſe that have communion with Chriſt therefore have a comfortable communion, being ſure to have it enlarged; for *To him that hath ſhall be given.* It is not onely true of his laſt coming, (when he ſhall come to judge the quick and the dead) *I come and my reward is with me*; but alſo of all his intermediate comings that are between: when he comes to the ſoul, he comes not onely to accept what is there, but ſtill with his

Rom. 15. 29.

Matth. 25. 29.

Rev. 22. 12.

SERM. II.

reward with him, the increaſe of grace to recompence all that is good with the increaſe thereof. This made his preſence ſo deſired in the Goſpel with thoſe that had gracious hearts; They knew all was the better for Chriſt, the company the better, for he never left any houſe or table where he was, but there was an increaſe of comfort and of grace. And as it was in his *Perſonall*, ſo it is in his *Spirituall preſence*; he never comes, but he increaſes *grace* and *comfort*.

*Exhortation to have Communion with Chriſt.*

Therefore let us be ſtirred up to have communion with Chriſt (by this motive) that thus we may have an increaſe of a further meaſure of grace. Let us labour to be ſuch as Chriſt may delight in, for our graces are *Honey* and *Spices* to him; and where he taſtes ſweetneſſe, he will bring more with him. To him that overcometh he promiſeth the *hidden Manna*; they had *Manna* before, but he means, they ſhall have more abundant communion with me, who am the *hidden Manna*. There is abundance in him to be had, as the ſoul is capable of abundance. Therefore we may moſt fruitfully and comfortably be converſant in holy exerciſes, and communion with Chriſt, becauſe our ſouls are fit to be inlarged more and more, till they have their fulneſſe in heaven; and ſtill there is more grace and comfort to be had in Chriſt, the more we have to deal with him.

Rev. 2. 17.

*Why grace is ſet forth by Hony & Wine.*

But to come to ſhew what is meant by *Honey* and *Wine*, *&c.* Not to take uncertain grounds from theſe words, but that which may be a foundation for us to build comfort and inſtruction on; we will not ſhew in particular what is meant by *Wine*

and

and *Hony*, for that is not intended by the Holy Ghoſt; but ſhew in generall, how acceptable the Graces of the Spirit of Chriſt are to him, that they feed him, and delight him, as *hony* and *wine* do us, becauſe in the covenant of grace he filleth us by the Spirit of grace, to have comfort in us as we have in him: For, *except there be a mutuall joy in one another, there is not communion.* Therefore Chriſt furniſheth his Church with ſo much grace as is neceſſary for a ſtate of abſence here, that may fit her for communion with him for ever in heaven. As *Iſaac* ſent *Rebekah* before the marriage, jewels, and ornaments to wear, that ſhe might be more lovely when they met: So our bleſſed Saviour he ſends to his Spouſe from heaven, jewels, and ornaments; that is, Graces, wherewith adorned, he may delight in her more and more till the marriage be fulfilled. Therefore in this book the Church is brought in delighting in Chriſt, and he in the Church. *Thy love* (ſaith the Church to him) *is ſweeter then wine.* Chriſt ſaith to the Church againe, *Thy love is ſweeter then wine.* Whatſoever Chriſt ſaith to the Church, the Church ſaith back again to Chriſt, and he back again to the Church; ſo there is a mutuall contentment and joy one in another.

Gen. 24. 22.

Cant. 1. 2.

*Eat O friends, drink, &c.*

Here is an invitation, when he comes ſtored with more grace and comfort, he ſtirs them up, both the Church, others, and all that beare good will to his people, that they would delight in the Graces and comforts of his Church. Whence obſerve, That,

*That all are ſtirred up to rejoyce in the Graces of the Church.*

We

SERM. II.

*Obſerv.*

*We ought to rejoyce in the Comforts and Graces of others, and of our ſelves.*

He ſtirreth up the Church here as well as others, for he ſpeaks to all, both to the Church, and the friends of it; he had need to ſtir her up to enjoy the comfort of her own Grace; for *they are two diſtinct benefits, to have Grace, and to know that we have it, though one Spirit work both.* The Spirit works Grace, and ſhews us the things that God hath given us; yet ſometimes it doth the one and not the other. *In the time of deſertion & of temptation we have Grace, but we know it not, right to comfort, but we feel it not.* There is no comfort of a ſecret unknown treaſure; but ſo it is with the *Church*, ſhe doth not always take notice of her own graces, and the right ſhe hath to comfort.

1 Cor. 2.12.

*We have need to have Chriſts Spirit to help us to know what good is in us.* And indeed a Chriſtian ſhould not only examine his heart for the evil that is in him, to be humbled; but what good there is, that he may joy and be thankfull. And ſince *Chriſt* accepts the very firſt fruits, the earneſt, & delights in them, we ſhould know what he delights in, that we may go boldly to him, conſidering, that it is not of our ſelves, but of Chriſt, whatſoever is graciouſly good, Therefore we ought to know our own graces, for Chriſt when he will have us comfortable indeed, will diſcover to us what cauſe we have to rejoyce, and ſhew us what is the work of his own Spirit, and our right to all comfort.

*that we ought to rejoyce in the graces of others*

And ſo, *for others*, we ſhould not only joy in our ſelves, and in our own condition and lot, but alſo in

SERM. II.

in the happy condition of every good Christian. There is joy in heaven at the conversion of one sinner. *God the Father* joyes to have a new Son: *God the Son* to see the fruit of his own Redemption, that one is pulled out of the state of damnation: And *God the holy Ghost*, that he hath a new *Temple* to dwell in. The *Angels*, that they have a new charge to look to that they had not before, to joyn with them to praise God: so there is joy in heaven, the *Father, Son, and holy Ghost, with the Angels* joy at it: And all *true-hearted Christians* joy in the graces one of another. Luke 15.10.

For 1 *God, Christ and the holy Ghost have glory by it.* 2 *The Church hath comfort by the increase of a Saint.* 3 The prayer of a Christian adds new strength to the Church. What a happy condition is it when Gods glory, the Churches comfort and strength, and our own joy meet together? So that we should all take notice of the grace of God in others. *Reason* 1. 2. 3.

We ought to take notice of the works of God in creation and providence, when we see the plants, starrs, and such like, or else we dishonor God. What then should we do for his gifts and graces in his children, that are above these in dignity? should we not take notice of what is graciously good, and praise God for it? Thus they did for *Pauls* conversion, they glorified God; for when they saw that *Paul* of a wolf was become not only a sheep, but a shepherd and leader of Gods flock, they glorified God. Gal.1.24.

So the believing *Iewes*, when the *Gentiles* were converted, they *glorified God, that he had taken the Gen-* Acts 11.18.

SERM. II.

*Gentiles to be his garden and people.* When *Paul* and others had planted the Goſpel, and God gave the increaſe, the godly Jews rejoyced at that good: So we that are *Gentiles* ſhould rejoyce to hear of the converſion of the Jews, and pray for it, for then there will be generall joy when that is. Want of joy ſhews want of grace. There is not a ſurer character of a Satanicall and Cainiſh diſpoſition, then to look on the graces of Gods children with a malignant eye: as *Cain* who hated his brother, becauſe his works were better then his. Thoſe that deprave the graces of God in others, and cloud them with diſgraces, that they may not ſhine, and will not have the ſweet oyntment of their good names to ſpread, but caſt dead flies into it, ſhew that they are of his diſpoſition that is the accuſer of the Brethren. It is a ſign of the child of the Devill; all that have grace in them, are of Chriſts and of the Angels diſpoſition; they joy at the converſion and growth of any Chriſtians. Here ſuch as they are ſtyled Friends and Beloved; and indeed none but Friends and Beloved can love as Chriſt loves, and delight as Chriſt delights.

# The third Sermon.

CANT. 5. 1, 2.

*I am come into my Garden, my Siſter, my Spouſe: I have gatherd my Myrrhe with my Spice: I have eaten my honey-combe with my honey: I have drunk my wine with my milk: Eat O friends, drink, yea drink abundantly, O Beloved.*
*I ſleep, but my heart waketh, &c.*

IT hath been ſhewed how Chriſt and the Church were feaſting together. She intreated his company *to come into his Garden, and eat his pleaſant fruits*: He according to her deſire, was come, and not onely feaſted on the Churches proviſion, but alſo brought more with him. Chriſt taking walks in his *Garden* (that is, his Church, and every particular ſoul, which is as a ſweet paradiſe for him to delight in) is much refreſhed; and in witneſſe of acceptance brings increaſe. What greater encouragement can we wiſh, then that we being by nature as the *Earth*, ſince the fall *accurſed*, ſhould be the ſoyl of Chriſts delight, planted and watered by him, and that what we yield, ſhould be ſo well taken of him. We are under ſo gracious a covenant, that all our ſervices are accepted, not onely our *hony*, but *hony-combe*, not onely our *wine*, but our *milke*, our weake ſervices as well as our ſtrong, becauſe the ſpirit which we have from him ſweetneth all. As in nature there is

SERM. III.

is one comon influence from heaven; but yet variety of flowers, Violets, Roſes, Gilly-flowers, Spices, all ſweet in their ſeverall kind with a different kind of ſweetneſſe: ſo all graces have their beginning from the common influence of Chriſts Spirit, though they differ one from another, and are all accepted of the *Father of lights*, from whence they come. Jam. 1. 17. Chriſt wonders at his own grace, *O woman, great is thy faith*: and *Cant.* 3. 6. *Who is this that cometh out of the wilderneſſe like pillars of ſmoke, perfumed with Myrrhe and frankincenſe, with all powders of the Merchant?* Mat. 15. 28.

Let not the weakeſt of all others be diſcouraged; Chriſt looks not to what he brings ſo much as out of what ſtore; that which is leaſt in quantity may be moſt in proportion; as the *Widows mite* was more in acceptance then richer offerings. Luk. 21. 3. *A paire of turtle doves* was accepted in the Law, and thoſe that brought but Goats hair to the building of the Tabernacle. Levit. 5. 7. Exod 35. 6.

The particulars here ſpecified that Chriſt took delight in. and inviteth others to a further degree of delight in, are,

*Myrrhe and Spice, honey and honey-combe, milke*:

which ſhew, 1. The ſweetneſſe of grace and 2. The variety ſpirituall 3. The uſe comfort.

*Myrrhe* and *Spices*, 1. Refreſh the ſpirits, and 2. preſerve from putrefaction; which are therefore uſed in embalming. If the ſoul be not embalmed with grace, it is a noyſome carrion-ſoul, and as it is in it ſelf, ſo whatſoever cometh from it is abominable.

*Milk*

*Milk* and *Hony* nouriſh and ſtrengthen, and *Wine* increaſeth ſpirits, and thereupon encourageth and allayeth ſorrow and cares. *Give Wine to him that is ready to dye.* The ſenſe of the love of Chriſt is ſweeter then wine, it baniſheth fears, and ſorrow and care. Prov. 13. 6.

From this mutuall delight between Chriſt and his Spouſe, we obſerve next, that,

*There is a mutuall feaſting betwixt Chriſt and his Church.* The Church bringeth what ſhe hath of his Spirit, and Chriſt comes with more plenty.

For there being ſo near a covenant between him and us, we are by his grace to perform all offices on our part we invite him, and he inviteth us. There is not the meaneſt Chriſtian in whome there is not ſomewhat to welcome Chriſt withall; but Chriſt ſends his proviſion before, and comes (as we ſay) to his own coſt; he ſends a ſpirit of faith, a ſpirit of love, a ſpirit of obedience. Some are content to invite others, but are loth to go to others, as if it were againſt ſtate: they would have wherewith to entertain Chriſt, but are unwilling to be beholding to Chriſt. 2. Some are content to have benefit by Chriſt, as his righteouſneſſe to cover them, &c. But they deſire not grace to entertain Chriſt; but a heart truly gracious deſireth both to delight in Chriſt, and that Chriſt may delight in it: It deſireth grace together with mercy, holineſſe with happineſſe. Chriſt could not delight in his love to us, if we by his grace had not a love planted in our hearts to him. But to come to ſpeak of this Feaſt.

We ſee it pleaſeth Chriſt to vaile heavenly matters with compariſons fetcht from earthly things,

SERM. III.

things, that ſo he may enter into our ſouls the better by our ſenſes.

1 Chriſt maketh us a *feaſt, a marriage-feaſt, a marriage feaſt with the Kings Son,* of all feaſts the moſt magnificent. A feaſt, firſt, in regard of the choice rarities we have in Chriſt: we have the beſt & the beſt of the beſt. *Fat things, and the marrow of fatneſſe,* Iſa. 25. 6. *wine, and wine on the lees,* refined, that preſerveth the ſtrength. The comforts we have from Chriſt, are the beſt comforts, the peace, the beſt peace, the priviledges, the higheſt priviledges; *His fleſh* crucified for us, to ſatisfie divine juſtice, *is meat indeed,* Ioh. 6. 55. *his blood* ſhed for us, *is drink indeed,* that is, the beſt, the only meat and drink to refreſh our ſouls, becauſe theſe feed our ſouls, and that to eternal life. The love of God the Father in giving Chriſt to death, and Chriſts love in giving himſelf together with full contentment to divine juſtice: this gift it is that the ſoul eſpecially feeds on. What could Chriſt give better then himſelf to feed on? he thought nothing elſe worthy for the ſoul to feed on; and this it daily feeds on, as daily guilt riſeth from the breakings out of the remainder of corruption. Other dainties are from this, from hence we have the Spirit, and graces of the Spirit. If he giveth himſelf, will he not give all things with himſelf?

2. As Chriſt maketh a feaſt of choice things for his elect and choice Spouſe, ſo there is variety as in a feaſt. *Chriſt is made to us of God, Wiſedome, Righteouſneſſe, Sanctification, and Redemption,* 1 Cor. 1. 30. that we ſhould not be too much caſt down with thoughts of our owne folly, guilt, unholineſſe, and miſery. There is that in Chriſt which anſwereth

to

to all our wants, and an all-ſufficiency for all degrees of happineſſe. Therefore he hath terms from whatſoever is glorious, and comfortable in heaven and earth. Chriſt is *al marrow, all ſweetneſſe*; all the ſeverall graces and comforts we have, and the ſeverall promiſes whereby they are made over and conveyed unto us, are but Chriſt diſhed out in a ſeverall manner, as the need of every Chriſtian ſhall require. Chriſt himſelf is the Ocean, iſſuing into ſeverall ſtreams, to refreſh the city of God. We can be in no condition, but we have a promiſe to feed on, and *all promiſes are Yea and Amen*, made to us in Chriſt, and performed to us for Chriſt. 2 Cor. 1. 20.

Therefore as we have in Chriſt a feaſt for variety, ſo for ſufficiency of all good. No man goeth hungry from a feaſt. It was never heard for any to famiſh at a feaſt. In Chriſt there is not only abundance, but redundance, a diffuſive and ſpreading goodneſſe; As in breaſts to give milk, in clouds to drop down ſhowers, in the Sun to ſend forth beams: As Chriſt is full of grace and truth, ſo he fully diſchargeth all his offices. There is an overflowing of all that is good for our good. He that could multiply bread for the body, he can multiply grace for our ſoul: If *he giveth life*, he giveth it *in abundance*: If *he giveth water of life*, he giveth *rivers*, not ſmall ſtreams: If *he giveth peace and joy*, he giveth it *in abundance*; his ſcope is to fill up our joy to the full. As he is able, ſo *is he willing to do for us far more abundantly then we are able to think or ſpeak*. Where Chriſt is preſent he bringeth plenty with him: If wine be wanting at the firſt, he will rather turn water into wine, then there ſhould be a fail. 3. Joh. 10. 10. Joh 7. 38. Eph. 3. 20.

SERM. III.

In a feaſt there is variety of friendly company, ſo here friends are ſtirred up to refreſh themſelves with us. We have the bleſſed Trinity, the Angels and all our fellow members in Chriſt to come with us.

4. There is no envy in ſpiritual things, wherein whatſoever the one hath, the other hath not the leſſe.

5. In a feaſt, becauſe it is intended for rejoycing, there is muſick: and what muſick like to the ſweet harmony between God reconciled in Chriſt and the ſoul, and between the ſoul and it ſelf in inward peace and joy of the Holy Ghoſt, ſhedding the love of Chriſt in the ſoul? We do not only joy, but glory under hope of glory, and in *afflictions*, and in *God now* as ours, in whom now by Chriſt we have an intereſt: when we come ſorrowfull to this feaſt, we depart chearfull. This, as *Davids* Harp, ſtills all paſſions and diſtempers of ſpirit.

Rom. 6, 5, 2, 3. 10.

The founder and maſterof the feaſt is Chriſt himſelf, and withall is both gueſt and banquet and all. All graces and comforts are the fruits of his Spirit, and he alone that infuſed the ſoul, can ſatisfie the ſoul; he that is above the conſcience, can only quiet the conſcience; he is that wiſedome that *ſends forth Maids*, his Miniſters, to invite to his feaſt. It is he that cheereth up his gueſts as here. Thoſe that invited others, brought oyntment and poured it out upon them, to ſhew their welcome, and to chear them up; as may appear by our Saviours ſpeech to the Phariſee that invited him. So we have from Chriſt both the oyle of grace, and oyle of gladneſſe; *he creates the fruits of the lips* to be *peace*, ſpeaking that peace and joy to

Prov. 9. 3.

Luke 7. 44.

Iſa. 27. 19.

to the heart that others do to the eare. *He raiſeth Paſtors according to his own heart, to feed his ſheep.* Ier. 3. 15.

The veſſels wherein Chriſt conveyeth his dainties, are, the miniſtry of the *Word* and *Sacraments*; by the *Word* and *Sacraments* we come to enjoy Chriſt and his comforts and graces, and by this feaſt of grace we come at length to the feaſt of feaſts, that feaſt of glory, when we ſhall be ſatisfied with the Image of God, and enjoy fulneſſe of pleaſures for evermore: and which addes to the fulneſſe, we ſhall fully know that it ſhall be a never-interrupted joy.

We ſee then that we cannot pleaſe Chriſt better then in ſhewing our ſelves welcome by cheerfull taking part of his rich proviſion. It is an honour to his bounty to fall to, and it is the temper of ſpirit that a Chriſtian aimes at, to *rejoyce alwayes in the Lord*, and that from enjoying our priviledges in him. We are not bidden to mourn alwayes, but to *rejoyce alwayes*, and that upon good adviſement; *rejoyce*, and *I ſay again* (ſaith Saint *Paul*) *rejoyce*. Indeed we have cauſes of mourning, but it is, that the ſeed of joy ſhould be ſown in mourning, and we can never be in ſo forlorn a condition, wherein if we underſtand Chriſt and our ſelves, we have not cauſe of joy. In me (ſaith Chriſt) *ye ſhall have peace*. The world will feed us with *bread of affliction*. If the world can help it, we ſhall have ſorrow enough, and Chriſt knows that well enongh, and ſtirrs us up to a cheerfull feeding on that he hath procured for us. He hath both will and skill, and power, and authority to feed us to everlaſting life; for the *Father* ſent him forth, and *ſealed* him to that

Phil. 4. 4.

Phil. 4. 4.

John 16 33.

SERM. III.

purpoſe. All the ſprings of our joy are from him.

Our duty is to accept of Chriſts inviting of us; what will we do for him if we will not feaſt with him? we will not ſuffer with him, if we will not feaſt with him. Happy are they that come, though compelled by croſſes and other ſharp wayes. If we rudely and churliſhly refuſe his feaſt here, we are like never to taſte of his feaſt hereafter. Nothing provokes ſo deeply as kindneſſe deſpiſed. It was the cauſe of the Jews rejection. *How ſhall we eſcape,* Heb. 2.3. not if we perſecute, but if we do but *neglect ſo great ſalvation?*

That which we ſhould labour to bring with us, is a taſte of theſe dainties, and an appetite to them. The ſoul hath a taſte of its own; and as all creatures that have life, have a taſte to reliſh and diſtinguiſh of that which is good for them from that which is offenſive: ſo whereſoever ſpirituall life is, there is likewiſe a taſte ſuitable to the ſweet reliſh that is in ſpirituall things. God ſhould loſe the glory of many excellent creatures, if there were not ſeverall ſenſes to diſcern of ſeverall goodneſſes in them: ſo if there were not a taſte in the ſoul, we could never delight in God, and his rich goodneſſe in Chriſt.

Taſte is the moſt neceſſary ſenſe for the preſervation of the creature, becauſe there is neareſt application in taſte; and that we ſhould not be deceived in taſte, we hear, ſee, and ſmell before, and if theſe ſenſes give a good report of the object, then we taſte of it, and digeſt it, and turn it into fit nouriſhment: ſo the ſpirit of man after judgment of the fitneſſe of what is preſented, taſtes of it, delights in it, and is nouriſhed by it. There is an attractive draw-

*Omnis vita guſtu ducitur.*

drawing power in the ſoul, whereby every member ſucks that out of the food that is convenient for it: ſo the ſoul draws out what is well digeſted by judgment, and makes it its own for ſevera l uſes. SERM. III.

The chief thing that Chriſt requireth, is a good ſtomach to theſe dainties.

The means to procure an appetite. We are firſt to be ſenſible of ſpirituall wants and miſery. The Paſſeover-lamb was eaten with ſower herbs: ſo Chriſt crucified reliſheth beſt to a ſoul affected with bitterneſſe of ſin. Whilſt men are rich in their own conceit, they go empty away; the duties and performances they truſt to, are but huſks, windy empty chaffe; ſwelling is not kind nouriſhment. 1.

That which hinders the ſharpneſſe of the ſtomach, are cold defluxions that dull and flat the edge of it: So upon plodding upon the world, cold diſtillations drop upon the ſoul, and take away the ſavour and deſire of heavenly things. Theſe things fill not. There is both a vanity of emptineſſe, and a vanity of ſhort continuance in them. *Why ſhould we lay out our money,* ſpend our time, our wits, our endeavours ſo much about them? this makes ſo many ſtarvelings in religion. 2. Iſa. 55.

Beſides, there be other noyſome affections to be purged, as 1 *Pet.* 2.1. Which breed a diſtaſt and diſaffection to ſpirituall things; as *malice* and *guile*, &c. How can Chriſt be ſweet to that ſoul unto which revenge is ſweet?

Exerciſe quickens appetite. Thoſe that exerciſe themſelves unto godlineſſe, ſee a need of ſpirituall ſtrength to maintain duty. A dull formaliſt keeps his round, and is many years after 3.

SERM. III.

where he was before: ſees no need of further growth or ſtrength. A Chriſtian life managed as it ſhould be indeed, as it hath much going out, ſo it muſt have much coming in, it will not els be kept up. Thoſe that have a journey to go, will refreſh themſelves for afterward, leſt they faint by the way.

4.

Iohn 6.27.

Company likewiſe of ſuch as *labour for that bleſſed food that endureth to life eternall*, provoketh to fall to as the reſt do, eſpecially if they be equall or go beyond us in our parts; for we will reaſon with our ſelves, have not I as much need as they? if theſe things be good for them, then they are good for me.

Rom. 11.1

Thus Saint *Paul* fortelleth, that the example of the Gentiles ſhould provoke the Jews to come in, and taſte of the Banquet Chriſt hath provided for both. Eſpecially this ſhould ſtirr us up earneſtly to take our part in that Chriſt hath provided, becauſe we know not how ſoon the table may be taken away: when men ſee the diſhes in removing, though before they have diſcourſed away much time of their ſupper, yet then they will fall freſh to it. We know not how long Wiſdom will be inviting of us, it will be our wiſedome to take our time, leſt we put off ſo long, as Wiſedome her ſelf laughs at our deſtruction, and a famine be ſent, of all famines the moſt miſerable, a famine of the Word, and then we may pine away eternally without comfort. Chriſt will not alwayes ſtand inviting of us, if we will none of his cheare, others will and ſhall, when we ſhall ſtarve.

Let this draw us on, that we ſee here Chriſts hearty and free welcome, the gracious look that we

we are like to have from him. He counts it an honor, ſince he hath made ſuch rich proviſion, for us to take part, and for our part ſhew our unwillingneſſe that ſuch free kindneſſe ſhould be refuſed. We cannot honor his bounty more then to feed liberally of that he liberally ſets before us. We are glad to perceive our friends upon invitation to think themſelves welcome. Let us open our mouth wide, ſince Chriſt is ſo ready to fill it, we are not ſtraitned in his love, but in our own hearts. *The widows oyle failed not till her veſſels failed.* We are bidden to delight in the Lord, and in whom ſhould we delight, but where all fulneſſe is to be had to delight in? Our ſpirits are not ſo large as thoſe bleſſed comforts are which we are called to the injoyment of. If the capacity of our ſouls were a thouſand times larger, yet there is ſo large a ſea of comfort in Chriſt, as they are not able to comprehend it: A taſte of theſe good things breed *joy unſpeakeable*, and *peace that paſſeth underſtanding*, what will the fulneſſe do? this taſte we feel in the ordinances will bring us to that fulneſſe hereafter. O let us keep our appetite for theſe things which are ſo delightfull, ſo ſuitable to the ſoul. How great is that goodneſs which he both lays up for hereafter, and lays out for his, even here in this life!

2. 2 King. 4 6. Phil. 4. 7.

In ſome ages of the Church, the feaſts that Chriſt hath made have been more ſolemn and ſumptuous then in other, thereafter as Chriſt hath been more or leſſe clearly and generally manifeſted. At Chriſts firſt coming there was a greater feaſt then before; becauſe the riches of Gods love in Chriſt were then laid open, and the

SERM. III.

Rev.19.9.

Pale of the Church was enlarged by the coming in of the Gentiles: ſo will there be a royal feaſt when the Jews ſhall be converted. *Bleſſed then ſhall thoſe be that ſhall be called to the Supper of the Lamb.* Suppers are in the end of the day, and this Supper ſhall be furniſht towards the end of the world.

But then will be the true magnificent ſupper, when all that belong to Gods election ſhall meet together, and feed upon that heavenly Manna for ever; then there will be nothing but marrow it ſelf, and wine without all dregs. In all our contentments here, there is ſome mixture of the contrary; then nothing but pure quinteſſence: In the mean time, he lets fall ſome Manna in this our wilderneſſe, he lets us reliſh that now; it will not putrifie as the other Manna did, but endure, and make us endure for ever; It's *the true bread of life.*

Marke how Chriſt draws his ſpouſe on to drink, and drink abundantly, there is no danger of taking too much: where the ſpring is infinite, we can never draw the wels dry, never ſuck theſe breaſts of conſolation too much; and the more ſtrong and chearfull we are, the better ſervice we ſhall perform, and the more accepted: delight is as ſugar, ſweet in it ſelf, & it ſweetens all things elſe. The joy of the Lord is our ſtrength. Duties come off more gracefully, and Religion is made more lovely in the eyes of all, when it comes forth in ſtrength and chearfulneſſe, Chriſts houſe-keeping is credited hereby. *In our Fathers houſe is plenty enough.* When the Martyrs had drunk largely of this wine, it made them forget friends, riches, honors, life it ſelf: the joy ſtirred up by it carried them through all torments. If

If any be hindred by conceit of unworthineſſe, if affected deeply with it, let them conſider what kind of men were compelled to the banquet, the blind, the lame. See a lively picture of Gods mercy in the example of the *Prodigall*, he fears ſharp chiding, and the *Father provides a rich banquet*; he goeth to his Father, but the *Father runs to meet him*. Did *Chriſt* ever turn back any that came unto him, if they came out of a true ſenſe of their wants? Luk. 15.

*Eat O friends.*

Chriſt out of the largeneſſe of his affections multiplieth new titles and compellations [ *Beloved* and *friends.*] Chriſt provides a banquet, and invites his *friends*, not his enemies. *Thoſe good things that neither eye hath ſeen, nor ear hath heard, that are above our conceit to apprehend*, theſe *are provided for thoſe that love him*, not that hate him: *he mingles* another cup *for them, a cup of wrath*, and *they are to drink up the very dregs of it*. Friendſhip is the ſweetneſſe, intimateneſs, and ſtrength of love. In our friends our love dwells and reſts it ſelf. Conjugall friendſhip is the ſweeteſt friendſhip. All the kinds and degrees of friendſhip meet in *Chriſt* toward his Spouſe; it is the friendſhip of a husband, of a brother, and if there be any relation in the world wherein friendſhip is, all is too little to expreſs the love of *Chriſt*. 1 Cor. 2.9. Pſal. 75.8.

In friendſhip there is mutuall conſent, an union of judgment and affections, there is a mutuall ſympathy in the good and ill one of another, as if there were one ſoul in two bodies: There be mutuall friends and mutuall enemies: *Do I not hate them* (ſaith *David*) *that hate thee?* There is mutuall love

love of one another for their own ſakes; in flattery men love themſelves moſt; in ſemblance love others, but all is in reflection to themſelves.

There is liberty which is the life of friendſhip, there is a free intercourſe between friends, a free opening of ſecrets: ſo here Chriſt openeth his ſecrets to us, and we to him, we acquaint him with the moſt hidden thoughts of our hearts, and we lay open all our cares and deſires before him: thus *Abraham* was called Gods friend, and the Diſciples Chriſts friends. It is the office of the Spirit to reveal the ſecrets of Chriſts heart to us concerning our own ſalvation; he doth not reveal himſelf to the world.

In friendſhip there is mutuall ſolace and comfort one in another. Chriſt delighteth himſelf in his love to his Church, and his Church delighteth her ſelf in her love to *Chriſt*: *Chriſts* delight was to be with the ſons of men, and ours to be with him.

In friendſhip there is a mutuall honour and reſpect one of another; but here is ſome difference in this friendſhip: for though Chriſt calls us friends, and therein in ſome ſort brings himſelf down to us, yet we muſt remember that this is a friendſhip of unequals: Chriſts honouring of us is his putting honour upon us, our honouring of him is the giving him the *honour due to his name.* This friendſhip muſt be maintained by due reſpect on our parts. As he is our friend, ſo he is our King, and knows how to correct us if we forget our diſtance. If he here ſeem to uſe us hardly, it is that he may uſe us the more kindly after: he ſuffers much for us, therefore we may well allow him the libertie of ſeaſonable correcting of us.

He

He that inſpireth friendſhip into others, will undoubtedly keep the lawes of friendſhip himſelf, will count our enemies his enemies. The enemies of the Church ſhall one day know that the Church is not friendleſſe.

And as his friendſhip is ſweet, ſo conſtant in all condition; he uſeth not his friends as we doe flowers, regard them onely when they are freſh, but he breeds that in us, that may make us ſuch as he may ſtill delight in us; if other friends faile (as friends may faile) yet this friend will never faile us: If we be not aſhamed of him, he will never be aſhamed of us. How comfortable would our life be, if we could draw out the comfort that this title of friend affordeth? It is a comfortable, a fruitfull, an eternall friendſhip.

*I ſleep, but my heart waketh.*

Here the Church expreſſeth a changeable paſſage of her ſpirituall condition after ſhe had recovered her ſelf out of a former deſertion, expreſſed in the beginning of the third Chapter, and enjoyed a comfortable intercourſe with Chriſt, now ſhe falleth into a deeper deſertion and temptation, from the remainder of corruption getting ſtrength. The Church now falleth aſleep, then 1.
was awake in the night, and ſought her beloved; 2.
here is no preſent awaking, no ſeeking; there no 3.
miſuſage by the watchmen as here, there ſhe findeth him more ſpeedily, here ſhe falls ſick with love before Chriſt diſcovereth himſelf.

Before we come to the words obſerve in general, *Obſer.*
*That the ſtate of the Church and every Chriſtian is ſubject to ſpirituall alterations.* The *Church* is alwaies

SERM. III.

waies *beloved*, a *ſpouſe*, a *friend*; but in this one ſtate there falleth out variety of changes. No creature is ſubject to ſo many changes as man; from a ſtate of innocency he fell into a ſtate of corruption; from that he by grace is reſtored to a ſtate of grace, and from grace to glory, where his condition ſhall be as *Chriſts* now is, and as the heaven the place is, altogether unchangeable. And in that ſtate of grace, how many intercourſes be theres? the foundation of Gods love to us, and grace in us alwaies remaining the ſame; once beloved, for ever beloved.

We ſee here after a feaſt the *Church* falleth aſleep: See it in *Abraham*, ſometimes *ſtrong in faith*, ſometimes fearfull: *David* ſometimes ſtanding, ſometimes falling, ſometimes recovering himſelf, & ſtanding faſter; ſometimes triumphing, *The Lord is the light of my countenance, whom ſhall I feare?* ſometimes again, *I ſhall one day fall by the hands of Saul.* In the very ſame Pſalm he begins with, *Rebuke me not in thy wrath*, and ends with, *Away ye wicked. Elias*, though *zealous*, yet after *flies for his life.* So *Iob*, *Peter*, ſometimes *reſolute* and *valiant*, otherwhile *ſinks for feare.*

Pſal. 17.1.
1 Sam. 27.1.
Pſal. 6.

The reaſon.

The ground is, by reaſon of variety of outward occurrences working upon the diverſity of prinicples in us, nature and grace; both nature and grace are alwayes active in us in ſome degree, when corruption gets ſtrength then we find a ſick ſtate creeping upon us, and loſe our former frame. It's with the ſoul as with the body, in a certain period of time it gathereth ill humours which break ont into aguiſh diſtempers at length: So the reliques of a ſpirituall diſeaſe not carried

carried away, will ripen and gather to a head. SERM. III.

This ſhould teach us when we are well, to ſtudy to keep an even courſe, and to watch over the firſt ſtirrings; and likewiſe if we ſee ſome unevenneſſe in our wayes, not to cenſure our ſelves or others over harſhly. Exact evenneſſe is to be ſtriven after here, but to be enjoyed in another world.

2. We ſee by comparing the ſtate of the Church here with the ſtate of it in the third Chapter, that where corruption is not thoroughly purged, and a carefull watch kept over the ſoul, thereafter a recovery will follow a more dangerous diſtemper, corruption will not onely ſtrive for life, but for rule. If there had been a thorough reformation in the Church after her form ertrouble, and a thorough cloſing with Chriſt, ſhe would not thus have fallen into a more dangerous condition. We ſee *David* in his latter times falls to *numbring of the people*; and *Sampſon* after he had done great ſervices for the Church, at length ſhamefully betrayes his ſtrength; and he that had ruled others, ſubmits to be ruled by a baſe ſtrumpet. *Jonas* for not thorough repenting for his running from his calling, fals after to quarrel with God himſelf. It is the beſt therefore to deal thoroughly with our hearts, elſe fleſh unſubdued will ow us a greater ſhame, and we ſhall diſhonor our own beginnings. Yet this is the comfort, that this will occaſion deeper humility and hatred of ſin in thoſe that are Gods, and a faſter cleaving to God than ever before, as we ſee in the Church here: afterwards grace will have the better at laſt. *Obſerv.* 2.

3. We may obſerve the ingenuity of the Church, *Obſerv.* 3.

SERM. III.

Church in laying open her own ſtate. It is the diſpoſition of Gods people to be ingenuous in opening their ſtate to God, as in *David, Nehemiah, Ezra*, &c.

The reaſon is thus:

1. By a free and full confeſſion we give God the honour of his wiſedome in knowing of our own condition ſecret and open; we give him the honour of mercy that will not take advantage againſt us, the honour of power and authority over us, if he ſhould ſhew his ſtrength againſt us. We yield unto him the glory of all his chief prerogatives: whereupon *Ioſhua* moveth *Achan* to a free confeſſion, *My ſon, give glory to God.*

2. We ſhame Satan, who firſt takes away ſhame of ſinning, and then takes away ſhame for ſin; he tempts us not to be aſhamed to do that we are aſhamed to confeſſe: ſo we by ſilence keep Satans counſell againſt our own ſouls. If we accuſe our ſelves we put him out of office, who is *the accuſer of the brethren.*

3. We prevent likewiſe malicious imputations from the world. *Auſtin* anſwered roundly and well, when he was upbraided with the ſinnes of his former age; what thou (ſaith he) findeſt fault with, I have condemned in my ſelf before.

*Quæ tu reprehendis ego damnavi.*

4. This ingenuous dealing eaſeth the ſoul, giving vent to the griefe of it; while the arrows heads ſticks in the wound it will not heal: Sin unconfeſſed is like a broken piece of ruſty iron in the body, it muſt be gotten out, elſe it will by ranckling and feſtring cauſe more danger. It is like poyſon in the ſtomach, if it be not preſently caſt up it will infect

*Ferrum in vulnere.*

the

the whole body. Is it not better to take ſhame to our ſelve now, than to be aſhamed hereafter before Angels, Divels and Men? How carefull is God of us by this private way to prevent future ſhame?

5. This faithfull dealing with our ſelves is oft a means of preſent delivery out of any trouble. *David* in the 32 *Pſalme* 4. was in a great diſtemper both of body and ſpirit; his moiſture was turned into the drought of Summer. It is thought he made this Pſalme between the time of his ſin and his pardon. What courſe taketh he? *I ſaid* (ſaith he) that is, *I reſolved to confeſſe my ſin, and thou forgaveſt the iniquity of my ſin.* Upon a free and full, a faithfull and ingenuous confeſſion, without *all guile of ſpirit*, he found eaſe preſently both in ſoul and body. The cauſe of Gods ſevere dealing with us, is, that we ſhould deal ſeverely with our ſelves. The beſt triall of Religion in us, is by thoſe actions whereby we reflect on our ſelves by judging and condemning of our ſelves; for this argueth a ſpirit without guile. Sin and ſhifting came into the world together. The ſubtilty of proud nature, eſpecially in eminency, is ſuch, that ſinnes may paſſe for vertues; becauſe ſin and Satan are alike in this, they cannot endure to appear in their one colour and habit; and ſo thoſe that oppoſe it ſhall be accounted oppoſers of good. This *guile of ſpirit* hath no *bleſſedneſſe* belonging to it, take heed of it.

4. Marke further one ſigne of a gracious ſoul, to be debaſed for leſſer defects, ſleepineſs and indiſpoſition to good. One would thinke drowſineſſe were no ſuch great matter; O but the Church

SERM. III.

Church had ſuch ſweet acquaintance with Chriſt, that every little indiſpoſition that hindred any degree of communion was grievous to her. You ſhall have a *Judas*, a *Saul*, an enormous offender confeſſe great falls that gripe his conſcience; all ſhall be caſt up, that the conſcience being diſburdened may feel a little eaſe: But how few have you humbled for dulneſſe of ſpirit, want of love, of zeal, and chearfulneſſe in duty? This accompanied with ſtrife againſt it, argues a good ſpirit indeed.

A carnall man is not more humbled for groſſe ſins, than a gracious Chriſtian for wants in good actions, when it is not with him as it hath been, and as he would. The reaſon is, where there is a clear and heavenly light, there leſſer motes are diſcernable: and ſpirituall life is ſenſible of any obſtruction and hinderance. This goeth in the world for unneceſſary nicety; the world ſtraineth not at theſe gnats: But thoſe upon whoſe hearts the Sun of righteouſneſſe hath ſhined, have both a clear ſight and a tender heart.

To come to the words [*I ſleep*] The Church fetcheth a compariſon from the body to expreſſe the ſtate of the ſoul. It is one uſe of our body, to help us in ſpirituall expreſſions. Whilſt the ſoul dwelleth in the body, it dependeth much in the conceiving of things upon the phantaſie, and the phantaſie upon the ſenſes. We come to conceive of ſpirituall ſleep by ſleep of the body, which we are well enough acquainted with.

The Church, as ſhe conſiſts of a double principle, fleſh and ſpirit mingled together in all parts, as

as darkneſſe and light in the twilight and dawning of the day: ſo here ſhe expreſſeth her condition in regard of either part; ſo far as ſhe was carnall, ſhe ſlept, ſo far as ſhe was ſpirituall, ſhe was awake.

In this mixt condition, the fleſh for the preſent prevailed, yet ſo as the Spirit had its working; *ſhe ſlept, bnt her heart waked.*

The words contain a confeſſion, *I ſleep*; and a correction, *but my heart waketh.* She hath a double aſpect; one to the ill, *her ſleeping*; the other to her good, *her heart in ſome degree awaked.* The Spirit of God is a diſcerning Spirit, it diſcovereth what is fleſh and what is Spirit.

So that we muſt not conceive this ſleep to bee that dead ſleep all men are in by nature; nor to be that judiciall ſleep, that ſpirit of ſlumber which is a further degree of that naturall ſleep to which God giveth up ſome as a ſeal of their deſperate coudition; but here is meant that ſleep that ariſeth out of the remainder of corruption unſubdued, and now is here in the Church prevailing over the better part. Fleſh and Spirit have both their intercourſe in us, as *Moſes* and *Amalek* had: unleſſe we ſtand upon our guard, the fleſh will get the upper ground, as we ſee here. The beſt are no further ſafe than they are watchfull.

For the clear underſtanding of this, obſerve ſome correſpondency in the reſemblance, wherein too much curioſity is lothſome and Poſtil-

SERM: III.

like, and calleth the mind too much from the kernell to the ſhell.

*The reſemblance between bodily and ſpirituall ſleep.*

Bodily and ſpirituall ſleep reſemble each the other in the cauſes, in the effects, and in the dangerous iſſue.

1. The ſleep of the body cometh from the obſtruction and binding up of the ſenſes by vapours which ariſe out of the ſtomach: ſo there be ſpirituall fumes of worldly cares and deſires that obſtruct the ſenſes of the ſoul; therefore our bleſſed Saviour counts it a ſpiritual ſurfetting, when the ſoul is oppreſſed with care about the world; luſts bring the ſoul a bed: Proſperity is a ſtrong vapour, if it overcome not the brain, yet it weakeneth it as ſtrong waters do. See it in *Solomon* himſelf. Luk. 21. 34.

2. The Diſciples fell aſleep in the garden when they were oppreſſed with heavineſſe and ſorrow, which paſſions will have the like effect upon the ſoul.

3. Sleep ariſeth oft from wearineſſe, and want of ſpirits: ſo there is a ſpirituall wearineſſe ariſing from diſcouragements, and too much expence of the ſtrength of the ſoul upon other matters, upon impertinencies that concern not the beſt ſtate of the ſoul.

4. Some are brought aſleep by muſick: ſo many by flattering enticements and inſinuations of others joyning with their own flattering deceitfull heart, are caſt into a ſpirituall ſleep.

5. Sleep ariſeth from want of exerciſe: when there is a ceſſation from ſpirituall exerciſe about the proper object of it, there followeth a ſpirituall ſleep. Exerciſe keeps waking.

6. Sleep ariſeth oft from cold diſeaſes, as Lethargies,

gies, from cold groſſe humours, cold, earthly, groſſe affections about the things here below, benumme the ſoul, and bring it into a heavy, drowſie, ſleepy temper. SERM. III.

Sometimes ſleep is cauſed by ſome kind of poyſon, eſpecially the poyſon of Aſpes, which kils in ſleeping: and do not ſinfull delights do the like to the ſoul? inſenſible evills are the moſt dangerous evils. 7. 8.

Otherwhile ſlothfull yawning company diſpoſes to ſleep: there is no more ordinary cauſe of ſpirituall ſleep, then converſing with ſpirituall ſluggards that count it a high point of wiſdome not to be forward in Religion. Theſe formall proud perſons as they are cold themſelves, ſo they labour to caſt water upon the heat of others. Nay, thoſe that are otherwiſe good, if declining in their firſt love, will incline others to a fellowſhip in the ſame ſecure temper, leſt they ſhould be upbraided by the vigilancy of others.

They are alike in the effects. Men diſpoſed to be aſleep deſire to be alone. Thoſe likewiſe that are diſpoſed to take a ſpirituall nap, will avoid company, eſpecially of ſuch as would awake them. They will hardly endure rouzing means. 1.

Men will draw the curtains and ſhut out light when they mean to compoſe themſelves to reſt: So when men favour themſelves in ſome wayes not allowable, they are afraid to be diſquieted by the light; light both diſcovereth, awaketh, and ſtirs up to working: And men when they are loth to do what they know, are loth to know what they ſhould do. *They that ſleep, ſleep in the night.* 1 Theſ. 5.7. 2.

SERM. III.

*night.* *Aſa*, otherwiſe a good King, ſhut up the Prophet in priſon for doing his duty: Much of the anger that men bear againſt the word laid open to them, is becauſe it will not ſuffer them to ſleep quietly in their ſins. Such as will ſuffer them to live quietly in their ſins, they are the quiet and honeſt men. There cannot be a worſe ſign than when men will not endure wholſome words; it is a ſign they are in an ill league with that they ſhould above all wage war againſt.

3. In ſleep phantaſie ruleth, and dreams in phantaſie; men in ſleep dream of falſe good, and forget true danger.

Iſa. 29. 6. Many cheriſh golden dreams, dream of meat, and when they awake their ſoul is empty. Vain hopes are the dreams of wakling men, as vain dreams are of ſleeping and carnall men, whoſe life is but a dream.

In ſleep there is no exerciſe of ſenſes or motion: as then men are not ſenſible of good or ill, they move neither to good or ill: Motion followeth ſenſibleneſſe what good we are not ſenſible of; we move not unto. Hence ſleep is of kin to death, for the time depriving us of the uſe of all ſenſes; and a ſecure profeſſor in appearance differs little from a dead profeſſor; both of them are unactive in good, and what they do, they do it without delight, in an uncomely and unacceptable manner, unbeſeeming the ſtate of a Chriſtian. It is all one to have no ſenſes, and not to uſe them; we may ſay of men in this ſleepy temper, as the Scripture ſpeaks of Idols, *they have eyes and ſee not, ears and hear not*, &c.

Pſal. 115. 5.

So

SERM. III.

So likewiſe they are alike in danger: In ſleep the pretiouſeſt thing men carry about them is taken away without reſiſtance; and they are ready to let looſe what they held faſt before, were it never ſo rich a jewell. And it is ſo in ſpirituall ſleepineſſe; men ſuffer the profeſſion of the truth to be wrung from them without much withſtanding; and with letting fall their watch, let fall likewiſe, if not their grace, yet the exerciſe of their graces, and are in danger to be robbed of all.

There is no danger but a man in ſleep is fair for, and expoſed unto: *Siſera* was ſlain aſleep, and *Iſhboſheth* at noon day: and there is no temptation, no ſin, no judgement, but a ſecure drowzy Chriſtian is open for; which is the ground of ſo oft inforcing watchfulneſſe by the Spirit of God in the Scriptures. As ſpirituall deadneſſe of ſpirit is a cauſe of other ſins, ſo likewiſe it is a puniſhment of them; God poureth a Spjrit of *dead ſleep upon men, and cloſeth up their eyes*, till ſome heavy judgement falleth upon them; and how many carnall men never awake in this world, till they awake in hell? No wonder therefore that Satan labours to caſt men into a dead ſleep all that he can, and deludes them with dreams of a falſe good, that their eſtate is good, and like ſo to continue, that to morrow ſhall be as to day, that no danger is near, though Gods wrath hangeth over their head, ready to be revealed from heaven.

2 Sam. 4.7.

Iſa. 24.10.

Thus we ſee how the reſemblance holds: Some apply this to *Conſtantines* time about three hundred years after Chriſt, when the Church upon peace and plenty grew ſecure, and ſuffered

SERM. III.

Theodor. l. 5.

Aug ad Januar. Epiſt. 119. *Tolerabilior Judæorum conditio quam noſtra.*

*Si tuo tempore hæc dicebas (O ſapiens Auguſtine) quid noſtra tempeſtate dixiſſes?* Gerſon de vit. ſpiritual.

*Si tenerentur in ſuo rigore, maxima pars Eccleſiæ damnaretur.*

Eccleſiaſticall abuſes to creep in. Religion begat plenty, and the daughter devoured the mother. This made the writers of the Eccleſiaſticall Stories to queſtion, whether the Church hath more hurt by open perſecution, or peace, when one Chriſtian undermineth and rageth againſt another. Humane inventions were ſo multiplyed, that not long after in *Auguſtines* time, he complained that the condition of the Jews was more tolerable then theirs; for though the Iews were under burdeus, yet they were ſuch as were impoſed by *God himſelf, and not humane preſumptions.* But *Gerſon* many hundred years after increaſeth his complaint: If (O *Auguſtine*) thou ſaidſt thus in thy time, what wouldeſt thou have ſaid if thou hadſt lived now, when men (as a toy taketh them in the head) will multiply burdens? And he was not afraid to ſay, that the number of humane conſtitutions was ſuch, that if they were obſerved in rigour, the greateſt part of the Church would be damned. Thus whilſt the husbandman ſlept, the envious man Satan ſlept not, but ſow'd his tares. Thus Popery grew up by degrees, till it overſpread the Church; whilſt the watchmen that ſhould have kept others awake, fell aſleep themſelves. And thus we anſwer the Papiſts, when they quarrell with us about the beginning of their errours. They ask of us when ſuch and ſuch an hereſie began: we anſwer, that thoſe that ſhould have obſerved them, were aſleep. Popery is a myſtery that crept into the Church by degrees under glorious pretences. Their errours had modeſt beginnings. Worſhiping of Images aroſe from reſerving the pictures of

of friends, and after that were brought into the Church. Invocation of Saints aroſe from ſome of the Fathers figurative turning of their ſpeech to ſome that were dead. Tranſubſtantiation had riſe from ſome tranſcendent unwary Phraſes of the Fathers. The Papacy it ſelf from ſome titles of the Romiſh Church and Biſhop. Nothing in Popery ſo groſſe, but had ſome ſmall beginnings, which being neglected by thoſe that ſhould have watched over the Church, grew at length unſufferable. No wonder if the Papiſts be caſt into a dead ſleep, they have drunk too deep of the whores cup. They that worſhip Images, are (as the Scripture ſaith) *like unto them, they have eyes and ſee not*, &c. They cannot diſcern of their errours, though they be never ſo ridiculous and ſenſeleſſe; as prayer in an unknown tongue, and ſuch like.

And upon this ſtate of the Church, let us adde this caution.

A Caution.

If the beſt men be ſo prone to ſleep, then we cannot ſafely at all times build upon their judgement. The Fathers of the Church were not always awake: there be few of them, but in ſome things we may appeal from themſelves ſleeping to themſelves waking. The beſt having ſome darkneſſe left in their underſtandings, and ſome luſts unſubdued in their affections, may write and ſpeak ſometimes out of the worſt part and principle that is in them, as well as out of the beſt, when they keep not cloſe to the rule.

When our adverſaries preſſe us with the authority of Fathers, we appeal to them where they ſpeak adviſedly, and of purpoſe. When

SERM. III.

*Patres in maximis ſunt noſtri, in multis vari, in minimis veſtri.* Wh.

they were not awaked by Hereticks, they ſpeak ſometimes unwarily and give advantages to hereticks that followed. It is the manner of our adverſaries to make the unwarrantable practiſe of the ancient times a rule of their practiſe, & the doubtfull opinnions of the ancients their own grand tenets. Wherein in both they deal unſafely for themſelves & injuriouſly towards us, when we upon grounds in ſome things diſſent, wch liberty (oft when they ſhould no) they wil take to themſelves.

But howſoever this ſleepy condition agreeth to the former times of the Church, yet I wiſh there were not cauſe to apply it to our ſelves in this latter age of the Church, wherein many of the ancient hereſies are revived; and beſides, the evils that accompany long peace take hold of us, and will prevail too far, if we do not rouze up our ſelves. The Church is the Common-wealth, and uſually they flouriſh and fall together. When there is a ſleep of the Church, for the moſt part there is a ſleep of the State. A civill ſleep is, when in grounds of danger there is no apprehenſion of danger; and this ſleep is a puniſhment of ſpirituall ſleep, when with *Ephraim* a State hath *gray haires, and knoweth it not*; when judgments abroad will not awake men; when noiſe and pinching will not awake, the ſleep muſt needs be deep. The whole world almoſt is in combuſtion round about us, and many countries thought themſelves as ſafe a little before their troubles as we now think our ſelves. If fear of outward dangers will not awake, then ſpirituall dangers will not, as being more ſecret, and not obvious to ſenſe. No wonder then if

Iſa. 7. 9.

if few will believe our report of the fearfull condition of wicked men in the world to come. A man may be ſtartled and awaked with outward dangers that is ſpiritually ſottiſh; but he that is careleſſe of outward danger, will be regardleſſe of what we ſay in ſpirituall dangers. The fear of danger may be the greater, when (as it was amongſt the Jews) thoſe that ſhould be watchfull themſelves, and awake others inſtead of awaking, rock the cradle, and cry, *peace, peace; the Temple of the Lord, the Temple of the Lord*: yet we muſt never forget to be mindfull with thankfulneſſe for peace, and the Goſpell of peace, which yet by Gods bleſſing we enjoy, always ſuſpecting the readineſſe of nature to grow ſecure under the abundance of favours, and ſo to bleſſe our ſelves in that condition.

Signes of a ſleepy ſtate.

1. Now we know that ſleep is creeping upon us, by comparing our preſent condition with our former, when we were in a more wakefull frame, when the graces of Gods Spirit were in exerciſe in us. If we differ from that we were, then all is not well.

2. Compare our ſelves again with that ſtate and frame that a Chriſtian ſhould be in; for ſometimes a Chriſtian goes under an uncomfortable condition all the days of his life, ſo that he is not fit to make himſelf his pattern. The true rule is that deſcription that is in the word of a waking and living Chriſtian; what ſhould a man be, take him at the beſt, the varying from that is a ſleepy eſtate as for inſtance, a Chriſtian ſhould walke *in the Comfort of the Holy Ghoſt*, live and walke by faith, he ſhould depend upon God, and reſiſt temptations: Faith ſhould worke by love and

Acts 9, 39.

SERM. III.

and love to our ſelves ſhould move us to honour our ſelves as members of Chriſt, to diſdain to defile our ſelves by ſinne: our hope, if it be waking, will purge us, and make us ſuitable to the condition we hope for in Heaven, and the Company we hope to have fellowſhip with there.

3. Again, look to the examples of others that are more gracious. I have as many encouragements to be thankful to God, and fruitful: they enjoy no more means then I, and yet they abound in aſſurance, are comfortable in all conditions: I am down in a little trouble, ſubject to paſſion, to barrenneſſe, & diſtruſt, as if there were no promiſes of God made to ſowing in righteouſneſſe. Thus a man may diſcern he is aſleep, by comparing himſelf with others that are better then himſelf.

4. Again, it's evident that we are *growing on* to a ſleepy condition by this, when we find a backwardneſſe to ſpirituall duties, as to prayer, thanksgiving, and ſpirituall conference. It ſhould be the joy of a Chriſtian (as it is his prerogative) to come into the preſence of Chriſt, and to be inabled to do that that is above himſelf: when what is ſpiritual in a duty will not down with us, it is a ſign our ſouls are in a ſleepy temper: There is not a proportion between the ſoul and the buſineſs in heavenly duties. Whom do we ſpeak to but God? whom do we hear ſpeak in the Word but God? what ſhould be the temper of thoſe that ſpeak to God, and hear him ſpeak to them? It ſhould be regardfull, reverent, obſervant. Thoſe that are watchfull to the eye of a Prince, what obſervance they ſhew, when they are to receive any thing from him, or to put up

up any requeſt to him; *offer this to the King*, ſaith the Lord by *Malachi*. When a man comes drowſily to God, to ſacrifice, to hear, to pray, &c. Offer this carriage to man, will he take it at thy hands? Oh the mercy of our patient God, that will endure ſuch ſervices as we moſt frequently perform! By this indiſpoſedneſſe to duty, more or leſſe, may we diſcover our ſleepineſſe. SERM. III. Mal. 1. 8.

5. When the ſoul begins to admire outward excellencies, when it awakes much to profits, pleaſures and honors, when men admire great men, rich men, great places; the ſtrength and fat of the ſoul is conſumed by feeding on theſe things, ſo that when it comes to ſpirituall things it muſt needs be faint and drowſie. By theſe and the like ſignes let us labour to ſearch the ſtate of our ſouls.

1. And to ſtir us up the more, Conſider the danger of a ſecure ſleepy eſtate. There is no ſin but a man is expoſed unto in a ſecure eſtate; therefore the Devill labours all he can to caſt a man into this temper, which he muſt do before he can make him fall into any groſſe ſinne. When he is aſleep he is in a fit frame for any ill action, he is in a temper fit for the Devill to work upon, to bring into any dream or errour, to inflame the fancies and conceits with outward excellencies. The Devill hath a faculty this way to make outward things great that are nothing worth; and to make ſuch ſins little, as if we were awake would affright us: he works ſtrongeſt upon the fancy, when the ſoul is ſleepy, or a little drowſie. Motives againſt ſleepineſſe.

There is no man that comes to groſs ſins ſuddenly, but he falls by little; and little firſt to ſlumber, and

SERM. III.

and from ſlumber to ſleep, and from ſleep to ſecurity, and ſo from one degree to another: it is the inlet to all ſins, and the beginning of all danger; therefore the Lord takes a contrary courſe with his, when he would preſerve a ſtate or perſon, he plants in them firſt a ſpirit of faith to belive that there is ſuch a danger, or ſuch a good to be apprehended, upon watching and going on in a courſe befitting that condition; and then faith (if it be a matter of threatning) ſtirrs up fear, which maketh up care and diligence. This is Gods method, when he intends the preſervation of any.

1. A man in his ſleep is fit to loſe all, a ſleepy hands lets any thing go with eaſe. A man hath grace and comfort, he lets it go in his ſpirituall ſleepineſſe; grace in a great meaſure, and the ſenſe and comfort of it altogether. A Chriſtian hath alwayes the divine nature in him that works in ſome degree; yet notwithſtanding in regard of his preſent temper and feeling, he may be in ſuch a caſe, that he ſhall differ nothing from a reprobate; nay, he may come to feel more then any ordinary wicked man feels whiles he lives in the world, as divers good Chriſtians do. And all this through their careleſneſs, that they ſuffer themſelves to be robbed of firſt beginnings, by yielding to delights, company & contentments; feeding their conceits with carnall excellencies, ſo favouring corruptions, and flattering that that is naught in them, they loſe the comfort of all that is good: who would do this for the gaining of a litttle broken ſleep? I ſay, broken ſleep; for the better a man is, the more unquietly ſhall he ſleep in ſcuh a ſtate, he ſhall feel ſtartlings

ſtartlings and frights in the midſt of his carnal delights, if he belong to God. SERM. III.

3. Beſides, God meets them with ſome croſſes in this world, that they ſhall gain nothing by it. There is none of Gods children that ever gained by yielding to any corruption, or drowſineſſe, though God ſaved their ſouls. It is always true, a ſecure ſtate is a ſure fore-runner of ſome great croſs, or of ſome great ſin. God cannot endure ſuch a temper of ſoul, liveleſſe & unfeeling performances and ſacrifices to him that hath given us ſuch encouragements: It muſt needs be diſtaſtefull to God when we go drowſily and heavily about his worke. *Curſed is he that doth the work of the Lord negligently*, if it were to ſheath his ſword in the bowels of his enemy, to which man is exceedingly prone, yet if it be not done with diligence and an eye to God, a man is curſed in it. 3. Ier. 48. 10.

4. And it is an odious temper to God; for doth not he deſerve cheerfull ſervice at our hands? hath he been a wilderneſſe to us? doth he not deſerve the marrow of our ſouls? doth not his greatneſſe require it at our hands that our ſenſes be all waking? and doth not his mercy deſerve, that our love ſhould take all care to ſerve him that is ſo gracious and good to us? Is it not the fruit of our redemption to ſerve him without fear in holineſſe and righteouſneſſe all the daies of our lives? 4. Luk. 1. 74.

5. It is a ſtate not only odious to God, but irkſome to our own ſpirits; the conſcience is never full at peace in a drowſie ſtate, or in drowſie performances. 5.

Likewiſe it is not gracefull to others, it breeds not

SERM. III.

not love in them to good things, but dislike. Carnal men, let them see a Christian not carry himself waking as he should, though they be a thousand times worse themselves, yet notwithstanding they think it should not be so; such a course doth not suite with so much knowledge and so much grace.

Let a man consider, wherefore God hath given the powers of the soul and the graces of the Spirit; are they not given for exercise, and to be imployed about their proper objects? A man is not a man, a Christian is not a Christian when he is not waking; he so far degenerates from himself, as he yields unto any unbeseeming carriage. Wherefore hath God given us *understanding*, but to conceive the best things? wherefore have we *judgement*, but to judge aright between the things of heaven and earth? wherefore have we *love* planted in us, but to set it on lovely objects? wherefore *faith*, but to trust God over all? wherefore *hatred*, but to fly ill? wherefore have we *affections*, but for spirituall things? when therefore our affections are dull, and lose their edge to these things, being quick only to earthly things; what a temper is this? how doth a man answer his Creation, the state of a new Creature? Wherefore are all graces planted in the soul, as faith and love, and hope and patience, but to be in exercise, and waking? to have these, and to let them sleep, and lye unexercised, so far a Christian forgets himself: and is not himself; a Christian as a Christian, that is, in his right temper, should be in the act and exercise of what is good in him, upon all occasions; as we say of God, he is a pure

Act

Act, becauſe he is always in working. The Spirit of God is a pure Act, in whom is no ſuffering, but all action, about that that is fit for ſo glorious a nature: So it is with the Spirit of man that hath the Spirit of God; he is in act, in exerciſe, in operation: As the Spirit is more or leſſe in him, ſo he is more or leſſe in operation, more or leſſe fruitfull. What a world of good might Chriſtians do, if they were in a right temper? what a deal of ill might they eſcape and avoid that they lye in, if they could rouze up their ſouls to be as Chriſtians ſhould be, and as their ſoul and conſcience tels them they ought and might be, did they rightly improve the means they have?

# The fourth Sermon.

## CANT. V. VER. II.

*I ſleep, but my heart wakes*, &c.

THe words, as it hath been ſhewed, contain a *Confeſſion*, *I ſleep*, and a *Correction*, my *heart waketh*. The confeſſion hath been handled: now ſomething of the correction, or exception.

*My heart waketh.*

The word *heart* you know includes the whole ſoul; for the *underſtanding* is the heart, *an underſtanding heart*: To lay things up in our *hearts*: there it is *memory*; and to *cleave in heart* is to cleave in *will*: To *rejoyce in heart*, that is, in the *affection*

SERM. III.

*affection*: ſo that all the powers of the ſoul, the inward man, (as *Paul* calleth it) is the heart.

*I ſleep, but my heart waketh.*

Indeed the Church might have ſaid, my heart ſleepeth, but my heart waketh, for it is the ſame faculty, the ſame power of the ſoul, both in the ſtate of corruption, and of grace, in which the ſoul is; as in the twy-light, we cannot ſay this is light, and that is darkneſſe, becauſe there is ſuch a mixture. In all the powers of the ſoul there is ſomething good, and ſomething ill, ſomething fleſh, and ſomething ſpirit. The heart was aſleep, and likewiſe was awake. *I ſleep, but my heart waketh.* You ſee here then firſt of all in this correction, That a Chriſtian hath two principles in him, that which is good, and that which is evill, whence iſſueth the weakneſſe of his actions and affections: They are all mixed, as are the principles from which they come forth. We may obſerve further, that a Chriſtian man may know how it is with himſelf, though he be mixed of fleſh and ſpirit; he hath a diſtinguiſhing knowledg and judgment whereby he knows both the good and evill in himſelf. In a dungeon where is nothing but darkneſſe, both on the eye that ſhould ſe, and on that which ſhould be ſeen, he can ſee nothing; but where there is a ſupernaturall principle, where there is this mixture, there the light of the Spirit ſearcheth the darke corners of the heart. A man that hath the Spirit knoweth both, he knoweth himſelf and his own heart. The Spirit hath a light of its own, even as Reaſon hath; how doth Reaſon know what it doth? by a reflex Act inbred in the ſoul. Shall a man that is naturall re-

*Obſer.* 1.

*Obſer.* 2.

flect

flect upon his ſtate, and know what he knows, what he thinks, what he doth; and may not the ſoul that is raiſed to an higher eſtate know as much? undoubtedly it may. Beſides; we have the Spirit of God, which is light, and ſelf-evidencing, it ſhews unto us, where it is, and what it is. The work of the Spirit may ſometimes be hindered, as in times of temptation, then I confeſs a man may look wholly upon corruption, and ſo miſtake himſelf, in judging by that which he ſees preſent in himſelfe, and not by the other principle, which is concealed for a time from him. But a Chriſtian when he is not in ſuch a temptation, he knows his own eſtate, and can diſtinguiſh between the principles in him, of the fleſh and Spirit, grace and nature.

*How the diſcerning work of the Spirit cometh to be ſo interrupted.*

Again, we ſee here in that the Church ſaith, *but my heart waketh*, that ſhe doth acknowledg there is good as well as evill: As the Church is ingenuous to confeſſe that which is amiſſe, *I ſleep*; ſo ſhe is as true in confeſſing that which is good in her ſelf, *but my heart waketh*; which yields us another obſervation:

*Obſer.* 3.

We ſhould as well acknowledge that which is good, as that which is evill in our hearts.

Becauſe we muſt not bear falſe witneſſe (as not againſt others) much leſſe againſt our ſelves. Many help Satan the accuſer, and plead his cauſe againſt the Spirit their Comforter, in refuſing to ſee what God ſeeth in them. We muſt make conſcience of this, to know the good as well as the evill, though it be never ſo little.

*What the church acknowledgeth in her heart waking, though aſleep.*

To come in particular, what is that good the Church here confeſſeth, when ſhe ſaith, that *her*

SERM. IV.

*heart waketh?* She in her ſleepy eſtate, firſt hath her judgment ſound in that which is truth of perſons, things, and courſes. Chriſtians are not ſo benighted when they ſleep, or given up to ſuch a reprobate judgment, as that they diſcerne not differences: they can diſcerne that ſuch are in a good way, and ſuch are not; that ſuch means are good and ſuch are not: A Chriſtan oft times is forced to do works out of judgment, in caſe his affections are aſleep or diſtracted; and ſuch works are approved of God, as they come from a right judgment & conviction, though the evill of them be chaſtiſed.

*A choice of good remaineth in the will.*

But all is not in the judgment: The child of God aſleep hath a working in the will, chooſing the better part which he will cleave to, he hath a generall purpoſe *to pleaſe God in all things*, and no ſetled purpoſe in particular for to ſleep thus: anſwerable to his judgment therefore he chooſeth the better part and ſide, he owns God and his cauſe, even in evill times, cleaving in reſolution of heart to the beſt wayes, though with weakneſſe.

Take *David* in his ſleepy time between his repentance and his foul ſin; If one ſhould have asked him what he thought of the wayes of God, and of the contrary, he would have given you an anſwer out of ſound jndgment thus and thus: If you ſhould have asked him what courſe he would have followed in his choice, reſolution and purpoſe, he would have anſwered ſavourly.

3. *They retain affection anſwerable to their judgment.*

Again, there remaineth affection anſwerable to their judgment, which though they find and feel it not for a time, it being perhaps ſcattered, yet there

there is a ſecret love to Chriſt, and to his cauſe and ſide, joyned with joy in the welfare of the Church and people of God, rejoycing in the proſperity of the righteous, with a ſecret grief for the contrary. The pulſes will beat this way, and good affections will diſcover themſelves; take him in his ſleepy eſtate the judgment is ſound in the main, the will, the affections, the joy, the delight, the ſorrow; this is an evidence *his heart is awake.*

4. *Conſcience.*

The conſcience likewiſe is awake; the heart is taken oft times for the conſcience in Scripture, a good conſcience (called a *merry heart*) *is a continuall feaſt.* Now the conſcience of Gods children is never ſo ſleepy, but it awaketh in ſome comfortable meaſure, though perhaps it may be deaded in a particular act, yet notwithſtanding there is ſo much life in it, as upon ſpeech or conference, &c. There will be an opening of it, and a yielding at length to the ſtrength of ſpirituall reaſon, his conſcience is not ſeared; *David* was but a little rouzed by *Nathan*, yet you ſee how he preſently confeſſed ingenuouſly that he had ſinned: So when *he had numbered the people*, his conſcience preſently ſmote him; and when he reſolved *To kill Nabal and all his family*, which was a wicked and carnall paſſion, in which there was nothing but fleſh; yet when he was ſtopped by the advice, and the diſcreet counſell of *Abigail*, we ſee how preſently he yielded. There is a kind of perpetuall tenderneſſe of conſcience in Gods people; all the difference is, of more or leſſe.

Prov. 15. 15.

*how the conſcience in a ſleepy tēper is known to be awake.*

2 Sam. 14.

1 Sam. 23.

And anſwerable to theſe inward powers is the outward obedience of Gods children in their ſleepy eſtate; they go on in a courſe of obedience,

SERM. IV. 5.

*So they retain alſo a courſe of obedience.*

*That we muſt diſtinguiſh between ſtates & fits.*

though deadly and coldly, and not with that glory that may give others good example, or yield themſelves comfort, yet there is a courſe of good duties, his ordinary way is good, howſoever he may ſtep aſide, his fits may be ſleepy when his eſtate is waking We muſt diſtinguiſh between a ſtate and a fit; a man may have an aguiſh fit in a ſound body: The ſtate of a Chriſtian is a waking ſtate in the inward man; the bie courſes he falleth into are but fits out of which he recovers himſelf.

*Uſe*

Whence, for uſelet us magnifie the goodneſs of God, that will remain by his Spirit, and let it ſtay to preſerve life in ſuch hearts as ours are, ſo prone to ſecurity and ſleepineſſe; let it put us in mind of other like mercifull and gracious doings of our God for us, that he gave his Spirit to us when we had nothing good in us, when it met with nothing but enmity, rebellion, and indiſpoſedneſſe: Nay, conſider how he debaſed himſelf and became man, in being united to our frail fleſh after an admirable nearnes, & al out of mercy to ſave us.

*Uſe 2.*

If ſo be that Satan ſhall tempt us in ſuch occaſions, *let us enter into our own ſouls, and ſearch the truth of Grace*, our judgement, our wills, our conſtant courſe of obedience, and the inward principle whence it comes, that we may be able to ſtand in the time of temptation. What upheld the Church, but this reflex act, by the help of the Spirit that ſhe was able to judge of the good as well as of the ill? Thus *David*, *the deſires of our ſouls are toward thee*: and though all this have befallen us, yet have we not forgotten thy Name, *Pſal.* 44. 20. This will enable us to appeal to God

as

as *Peter*, *Lord thou knoweſt I love thee*, it is an evidence of a good eſtate.

*My heart waketh.*

Obſer. Gods children never totally fall from grace, though they ſleep, yet their heart is awake. The Prophet *Eſay* ſpeaking of the Church & children of God, *Iſa.* 6. 13. ſaith, *It ſhall be as a tree, as an oak whoſe ſubſtance is in them, when they caſt their leaves*; Though you ſee neither fruit, nor leaves, yet there is life in the root: *The ſeed remains in them*, there is alway a ſeed remaining, it is an immortall ſeed that we are begotten by. *Peter* when he denied his Maſter, was like an Oak that was weather-beaten, yet there was life ſtill in the root; for queſtionleſſe *Peter* loved Chriſt from his heart. Sometimes a Chriſtian may be in ſuch a poor caſe as the ſpirituall life runneth all to the heart, and the outward man is left deſtitute: As in wars, when the enemy hath conquered the field, the people run into the City; and if they be beaten out of the City they run into the Caſtle: the grace of God ſometimes fails in the outward action, in the field, when yet it retireth to the heart, in which fort it is impregnable: *My heart waketh.*

1 Pet. 1.

Mar. 29.

When the outward man ſleeps, & there are weak dull performances, and perhaps actions amiſſe too, yet notwithſtanding *the heart waketh*: As we ſee in a ſwound or great ſcares, the bloud, ſpirits and life, though they leave the face and hands, &c, yet they are in the heart. It is ſaid in the Scripture of *Eutichus, his life was in him ſtill, though he ſeemed to be dead.* As Chriſt ſaid of *Lazarus*, ſo a man may ſay of a Chriſtian in his worſt ſtate, his life is in him

*Simile.* Acts. 20. 9. Ioh. 11.

SERM. IV.

*Obſer.*

him ſtil, he is not dead, but ſleeps, *his heart waketh.*

This is a ſound doctrine and comfortable, agreeable to Scripture, and the experience of Gods people; we muſt not loſe it therefore, but make uſe of it againſt the time of temptation. There are ſome pulſes that diſcover life in the ſickeſt man, ſo are there ſome breathings and ſpirituall motions of the heart, that will comfort in ſuch times. Theſe two never fail on Gods part, his *love* which is unchangeable, and his grace, a fruit of his love; And two on our part, the impreſſion of that love: and the gracious work of the new creature. *Chriſt never dies* (ſaith the Apoſtle) as he never dyes in himſelf (after his Reſurrection) ſo he never dyes in his children, there is always ſpirituall life.

*The heart waketh.*

*Uſe for comfort*

This is a ſecret of Gods Sanctuary, onely belonging to Gods people, others have nothing to do with it; they ſhall ever love God, and God will ever love them. The Apoſtle, 1 *Cor.* 14. 8. ſaith, *Love never failes.* Gifts you know ſhall be aboliſhed, becauſe the manner of knowing we now uſe ſhall ceaſe, *we ſee through a glaſſe*, &c. *but love abideth.* Doth our love to God abide for ever, and doth not his love to us whence it cometh? ours is but a reflexion of Gods love. Let us comfort our ſelves therefore in this for the time to come, that in all the uncertainty of things in this life, we have to day and loſe to morrow; as we ſee in *Job*, there is ſomewhat a Saint may build on that is conſtant and unmoveable. *I am the Lord, I change not, therefore you ſonnes of* Jacob *are not conſumed.* God ſhould deny himſelf as it were, which he cannot

not do, and his own conſtant Nature, if he ſhould vary this way.

*A Chriſtian is what his heart and inward man is.* It is a true ſpeech of Divines, *God and nature begin there. Art* begins with the *face*, and outward lineaments, as hypocriſie, outward painting, and expreſſions: But grace at the *Center*, and from thence goes to the *Circumference*; And therefore the Church values her ſelf here by the diſpoſition and temper of her heart. Thus I am for my outward carriage, &c. *I ſleep, but my heart waketh.*

Therefore let us enter into our conſciences and ſouls for the tryall of our eſtates, how it is with our judgments: Do we allow of the wayes of God, and of the Law of the inward man? How is it with our affections, and bent to good things? How with our hatred, our zeal? Is it not more for outward things, then for inward? We know what *Iehu* ſaid to *Ionadab*, when he would have him into his Chariot, *Is thine heart as mine? then come to me*: So ſaith Chriſt, is thine heart as mine? then give me thy hand: but firſt God muſt have our hearts, and then our hands; a man otherwiſe is but a Ghoſt in Religion, which goes up and down without a ſpirit of its own; but a picture, that hath an outſide, and is nothing within. Therefore eſpecially let us look to our hearts: *Oh that there were ſuch an heart in this people* (ſaith God to *Moſes*) *to fear me always for their good!* This is it that Gods children deſire, that their hearts may be aright ſet. *Waſh thy heart O Ieruſalem* (ſaith the Prophet) *from thy wickedneſſe*, &c. Indeed all the outward man depends upon this; therefore Satan, if he can get this Heb. 11.

fort, he is ſafe; and ſo Satans Vicar. It was a watch-word that was in *Gregory* 13. his time, in *Q. Elizabeths* days, *My ſon, give me thy heart*; diſſemble, go to Church, and do what you will, but *Da mihi cor*, be in heart a Papiſt, and go where you will. God is not content with the heart alone (the Devil knows if he have the heart, he hath all: but God, as he made all, both ſoul and body, he will have all) but yet in times of temptation the chief triall is in the heart.

And from hence we have a main difference between one Chriſtian and another. A ſound Chriſtian doth what he doth from the heart, he begins the work there; What good he doth, he loves in his heart firſt, judgeth it to be good, and then he doth it.

An Hypocrite doth that he doth outwardly, and allowes not inwardly of that good he doth; he would do ill and not good if it were in his choice: The good that he doth is for by-ends, for correſpondence, or dependence upon others, or conformity with the times, to cover his deſignes under formality of Religion, that he may not be known outwardly, as he is inwardly, an Atheiſt, and an Hypocrite; So he hath falſe aimes, his heart is not directed to a right marke. But it is otherwiſe with Gods child, whatſoever good he doth, it is in his heart firſt: Whatſoever ill he abſtains from, he doth it from his heart, judging it to be naught; therefore he hates it, and will not do it. Here is a main difference of the Church from all others; It wakes in the heart, though the outward man ſleeps: But other mens hearts ſleep when they wake, as you know

know ſome men will walk and do many things in their ſleep. An Hypocrite is ſuch a kind of man; he walks and goes up and down, but his heart is aſleep, he knows not what he doth, nor doth he the thing out of judgment, or love, but as one aſleep (as it were) he hath no inward affection unto the things he doth. A Chriſtian is the contrary, his his heart is awake when he is aſleep. SERM. IV.

Another difference from the words you may have thus; A Chriſtian by the power of Gods Spirit in him, is ſenſible of the contrarieties in him, complaines, & is aſhamed for the ſame; but an hypocrite is not ſo, he is not ſenſible of his ſleepines: *I ſleep* (ſaith the church) ſo much as the church ſaith ſhe ſlept, *ſo much ſhe did not ſleep*: for a man that is aſleep cannot ſay he is aſleep, nor a dead man that he is dead: *So far as he ſaith he is aſleep, he is awake.* Now the Church confeſſeth that ſhe was *aſleep*, by that part that was awake in her; other men do not complain, are not ſenſible of their ſleepineſſe and ſlumbring, but compoſe themſelves to ſlumber, & ſeek darknes, which is a friend of ſleep they would willingly be ignorant to keep their conſcience dul & dumb as much as they can, that it may not upbraid them. This is the diſpoſition of a carnal man, he is not ſenſible of his eſtate, as here the church is.

*A waking ſtate is a bleſſed ſtate.* *Obſer.*

The Church you ſee ſupports and comforts her ſelf, that ſhe was waking in her inward man, that ſhe was happy in that reſpect. How ſhall we do to keep and preſerve our ſouls in this waking condition, eſpecially in theſe drowſie times? *Queſt.*

1. Propound unto them waking conſiderations.

What

SERM. IV.

*Answ.* 1. *Means.* *Is to propound waking considerations.*

What cauſeth our ſleeps, but want of matters of more ſerious obſervation? None will ſleep when a thing is preſented of excellency more then ordinary; to ſee and know, and think of what a ſtate we are nov advanced unto in Chriſt, what we ſhall be ere long, yea the fearfull eſtate we ſhould be in, if God leave us to our ſelves? A ſtate of aſtoniſhment, miſerable and wretched, beyond ſpeech, nay beyond conceit. Thus did the bleſſed ſouls in former times, exerciſe their thoughts, raiſe and ſtirr them up by meditation, that ſo they might hold their ſouls in a high eſteem of the beſt things, and not ſuffer them to ſleep. We never fall to ſleep in earthly and carnall delighss, till the ſoul lets its hold go of the beſt things, and ceaſeth to thinke of, & to wonder at them. What made *Moſes* to fall from the delights of Egypt? he ſaw the baſeſt things in Religion were greater then the greateſt things in the Court, yea in the World. *He eſteemed the reproch of Chriſt better then the greateſt treaſures of Egypt.* Heb. 11.

2 *Conſideration.* Make the *heart think of the ſhortneſſe and vanity of this life*, with the uncertainty of the time of our death; and of what wondrous conſequence it is to be in the ſtate of Grace before we die; *The uncertainty of the gales of Grace*; that there may be a good hour, which if we paſſe, we may never have the like again. As the Angell deſcended at a certain hour into the pool of *Bethesda*, when thoſe that entred not immediately after, went away ſick as they came; So there are certain good hours, which let us not neglect, this will help to keep us waking. *The neceſſity of Grace*, and then the free Luk 19. 42. Mat. 23. 37. Iohn 5. 3 *Conſideration.*

diſpenſing

diſpenſing of it in Gods good time, and withall the terror of the Lords day; *Remembring* (ſaith Saint *Paul*) *the terrour of the Lord, I labour to ſtirre up all men*, &c. Indeed it ſhould make us ſtirre up our hearts, when we conſider the terrour of the Lord, to think that ere long we ſhall be all drawn to an exact account before a ſtrict preciſe Iudg; And ſhall our eyes then be ſleeping and careleſſe? Theſe and ſuch like conſiderations out of ſpirituall wiſdome we ſhould propound to our ſelves, that ſo we might have waking ſouls, and preſerve them in a right temper.

2 Cor. 5. 11.

2. *Means.*
*To keep faith waking.*

The ſoul is as the object is that is preſented to it, and as the certainty of the apprehenſion is of that object; It conduceth much therefore to the awakening of the ſoul to keep faith awake. It's not the greatneſſe alone, but the preſence of great things that ſtirr us; now it is the nature of faith to make things powerfully preſent to the ſoul; for it ſets things before us in the word of *Jehovah*, that made all things of nothing, and is Lord of his word, to give a being to whatſoever he hath ſpoken. Faith is an awakening Grace; keep that awake, and it will keep all other graces waking.

Heb. 11.

When a man beleives, that all theſe things ſhall be on fire ere long, that *Heaven* and *Earth* ſhall fall in peices, that we ſhall be called to give an account, before that time we may be taken away. Is it not a wonder we ſtand ſo long, when Cities, ſtone walls fall, and Kingdomes come to ſudden periods? When faith apprehends, and ſets this to the eye of the ſoul, it affects the ſame marvellouſly; therefore let faith ſet before the ſoul ſome preſent

Serm. IV.

ſent thoughts according to its temper; ſometimes terrible things to awaken it out of its dulneſs; ſometimes glorious things, *Promiſes*, & *Mercies*, to awaken it out of its ſadneſſe, &c. When we are in a proſperous eſtate, let faith make preſent al the ſins and temptations that uſually accompany ſuch an eſtate; as pride, ſecurity, ſelf-applauſe, and the like: It in adverſity, think alſo of what ſins may beſet us there; this will awaken up ſuch graces in us, as are ſuitable to ſuch an eſtate, for the preventing of ſuch ſins and temptations, and ſo keep our hearts in *exerciſe to godlineſſe*; then which nothing will more prevent ſleeping.

3. *Means.* *To labour for a great meaſure of the Spirit of God.*

And withall, *labour for abundance of the Spirit of God*; for what makes men ſleepy and drowſie? *the want of ſpirits*: we are dull, and overloden with groſſe humours, whereby the ſtrength ſinkes and failes: Chriſtians ſhould know, that there is a neceſſity, if they will keep themſelvs waking, to keep themſelves ſpirituail. Pray for the Spirit above all things, it is the life of our life, the ſoul of our ſoul. What is the body without the ſoul, or the ſoul without the Spirit of God? even a dead lump. And let us keep our ſelves in ſuch good wayes, as we may expect the preſence of the Spirit to be about us, which will keep us awake.

4. *Means.* *To keep our ſelves in the light*

*We muſt keep our ſelves in as much light as may be*; for all ſleepineſſe comes with darkneſſe: Let us keep our ſouls in a perpetuall light, when any doubt or darke thought ariſeth, upon yielding thereunto comes a ſleepy temper, ſleepineſſe in the affections ariſeth from darkneſſe of judgment, the more we labour to increaſe our knowledg, and the

the more the ſpirituall light and beams of it ſhine in at our windowes, the better it will be for us, and the more ſhall wee bee able to keep awake. What makes men in their corruptions to avoid the Miniſtery of the Word, or any thing that may awake their conſciences? It is the deſire they have to ſleep, they know, the more they know, the more they muſt practiſe, or elſe they muſt have a galled conſcience: They ſee Religion will not ſtand with their ends, rich they muſt bee, and great they will be; but if they ſuffer the light to grow upon them, that will tell them they muſt not riſe and be great by theſe and ſuch courſes. A gracious heart will bee deſirous of ſpirituall knowledge eſpecially, and not care how near the Word comes, becauſe they ingenuouſly and freely deſire to be ſpiritually better; they make all things in the world yield to the inward man; they deſire to know their own corruptions and evils more and more, and therefore love the light, *as children of the light, and of the day*, 1 *Theſ.* 5. Sleep is a work of darkneſſe, men therefore of dark and drowſie hearts deſire darkneſſe for that very end, that their conſciences may ſleep.

*Labour to preſerve the ſoul in the fear of God*; becauſe fear is a waking affection, yea one of the wakefulleſt: For, *Naturally we are more moved with dangers then ſtirred with hopes*; therefore that affection that is moſt converſant about danger, is the moſt rouzing and waking affection: Preſerve therefore the fear of God by all means. It is one

5. *Means.*

Character

SERM. IV.

Character of a Christian, who, when he hath lost almost all Grace (to his feeling) yet the feare of God is always left with him; he fears sin, and the reward of it; and therefore God makes that awe the Bond of the New Covenant. *I will put my fear in their hearts, that they shall never depart from me,* Ier. 32. 39. One Christian is better then another, by how much more he wakes, and fears more then another. Of all Christians, marke those are most gracious, spirituall, and heavenly, that are the most awefull, and carefull of their speeches, courses, and demeanors: tender even of offending God in little things. You shall not have light and common oathes come from them, nor unsavoury speeches. Sometimes a good Christian may in a state of sleepinesse be faulty some way: But he grows in the knowledge of the greatnesse of God, and the experience of his own infirmities, as he grows in the sense of the love of God. He is afraid to lose that sweet Communion any way, or to grieve the Spirit of God: Therefore, always *as a man grows in grace, he growes in awfulnesse, and in jealousie of his owne corruptions.* Therefore, let us preserve by all means this awfull affection, the feare of God: Let us then often search the state of our own souls, our going backward or forward, how it is between God and our souls; how fit we are to die, and to suffer; how fit for the times that may befall us. Let us examine the state of our own souls, which will preserve us in a waking estate, especially examine our selves in regard of the sinnes of the place, and the times where we live; of the sinnes of our own inclination, how we stand affected and byased in all those respects,

*Who are the best Christians.*

reſpects, and ſee how jealous we are of dangers in this kind. Thoſe that will keep waking ſouls, muſt conſider the danger of the place where they live, and the times; what ſinnes, reigne, what ſins ſuch a company as they converſe with are ſubject unto, and their own weakneſſe to be led away with ſuch temptations. This jealouſie is a branch of that feare that we ſpeak of before, ariſing from the ſearching of our own hearts and diſpoſitions. It is a notable means to keep us awake, when we keep our hearts in feare of ſuch ſins as either by calling, cuſtome, company, or the time we live in, or by our own diſpoſition we are moſt prone to.

There is no Chriſtian but he hath ſome ſpeciall ſin to which he is more prone then to another, one way or other, either by courſe of life, or complexion. Here now is the care and watchfulneſſe of a Chriſtian Spirit, that knowing by examination and triall of his own heart, his weakneſſe, he doth eſpecially fence againſt that which he is moſt inclined to, and is able to ſpeak moſt againſt that ſin of all others, and to bring the ſtrongeſt arguments to diſhearten others from practiſe of it.

*6. Means.*
*The Commun. of Saints.*

In the laſt place, it is a thing of no ſmall conſequence, that we keep company with waking and faithfull Chriſtians, ſuch as neither ſleep themſelvs, or do willingly ſuffer any to ſleep that are near them.

It is a report, and a true one, of the ſweating ſickneſs, that they that were kept awake by thoſe that were with them eſcaped; but the ſickneſſe was deadly if they were ſuffered to ſleep. It is one of the beſt fruits of the Communion of Saints, and of our

our ſpirituall good acquaintance to keep one another awake. It's an unpleaſing work on both ſides: But we ſhall one day cry out againſt all them that have pleaſed themſelves and us in rocking us aſleep, and thank thoſe that have pulled us *with feare* out of the fire, though againſt our wils.

Let us labour upon our own hearts in the conſcionable uſe of all theſe means, in their ſeverall times and ſeaſons, that we may keep our hearts waking; and the more earneſt ought we to be from conſideration of the preſent age & ſeaſon in which we live.

Certainly a drowſie temper is the moſt ordinary temper in the world: For would men ſuffer idle words, yea filthy and rotten talkè to come from their mouths if they were awake? Would a waking man run into a pit, or upon a ſwords point? A man that is aſleep may do any thing. What do men mean when they fear not to lye, diſſemble, & ruſh upon the pikes of Gods diſpleaſure? When they ſay one thing and do another, are they not dead? or take them at the beſt, are they not aſleep? Were they awake, would they ever do thus? Will not a fowl that hath wings avoid the ſnare? or will a beaſt run into a pit when it ſees it? there is a ſnare laid in your Play-houſes, Gaming-houſes, Common-houſes that Gentlemen frequent that generally profeſſe Religion, & take the Communion. If the eye of their ſouls were awake, would they run into theſe ſnares, that their own conſciences tell them are ſo? if there be a goodneſſe in their ſouls it is wondrous ſleepy. There is no man (even the beſt) but may complain ſomething, that they

they are overtaken in the contagion of theſe infectious times, they catch drowſie tempers; (as our Saviour ſaith) of thoſe latter times, *For the abundance of iniquity the love of many ſhall wax cold.* A chill temper growes ever from the coldneſſe of the times that we live in, wherein the beſt may complain of coldneſſe, but there is great difference. The life of many, we ſee, is a continuall ſleep.

Let us eſpecially watch over our ſelves in the uſe of liberty and ſuch thiugs as are in themſelves lawfull. It is a bleſſed ſtate, when a Chriſtian carries himſelf ſo in his liberty, that his heart condemnes him not for the abuſe of that which it alloweth, and juſtly in a moderate uſe. Recreations are lawfull, who denies it? To refreſh a mans ſelf, is not only lawfull, but neceſſary. *God knew it well enough*: Therefore hath allotted time for ſleep, and the like. *But we muſt not turn Recreation into a calling*, to ſpend too much time in it.

Where there is leaſt feare, there is moſt danger alwayes. Now becauſe in lawfull things there is leaſt fear, *we are there in moſt danger*. It is true for the moſt part, *Licitis perimus omnes*, more men periſh in the Church of God by the abuſe of lawfull things then by unlawfull, more by meat, then by poiſon: Becauſe every man takes heed of poiſon, being he knows the venome of it; but how many men ſurfeit and dye by meat? ſo many men die by lawfull things, they eternally periſh in the abuſe of their liberties, more then in groſſe ſinnes. Therefore let us keep awake, that we may carry our ſelves ſo in our liberties, that

SERM. V.

*The excellency of a waking Christian.*

we condemn not our selves in the use of them. We will conclude this point with the Meditation of the *Excellency* of a waking Christian, when he is in a right temper, he is an excellent person, fit for all assayes, he is then impregnable: Satan hath nothing to do with him, for he (as it is said) is then a *wise man*, and *hath his eyes in his head*, he knows himself, his state, his enemies, and adversaries, the snares of Prosperity and Adversity, & of all conditions, &c. Therefore he being *awake*, is not overcome of the evill of any condition, and is ready for the good of any estate. He that hath a waking soul, he sees all the advantages of good, and all the snares that might draw him to ill. What a blessed estate is this? In all things therefore watch, in all estates, in all times and in all actions. There is a danger in every thing without watchfulnesse. There is a Scorpion under every stone, (as the Proverb is) a snare under every blessing of God, and in every condition, which Satan useth as a weapon to hurt us. *Adversity* to discourage us, *Prosperity* to puffe us up. When if a Christian hath not a waking soul, Satan hath him in his snare; In *Prosperity* to be proud and secure; In *Adversity* to murmure, repine, be dejected, and call Gods *Providence* into question. When a Christian hath a heart, and grace to awake, then his *Love*, his *Patience*, his *Faith* is *awake*, as it should be, he is fit for all conditions to do good in them, and take good by them.

Marke 13. 37.

Let us therefore labour to preserve whatchfull and waking hearts continually, that so we may be fit to live, to die, and to appear before the judgment-seat of God, to do what we should do, and suffer

ſuffer what we ſhould ſuffer, being ſquared for all eſtates whatſoever.

# The fifth Sermon.

Cant. 5. Ver. 11.

*It is the voice of my Beloved that knocketh, ſaying, Open unto me, my Siſter, my Love, my Dove, my Undefiled: For my head is filled with dew, and my locks with the drops of the Night.*

Hitherto by Gods aſſiſtance, we have heard largely, both of the *Churches ſleeping*, and *Heart-waking*. What this *ſleeping*, and *Heart-waking* is; How it comes, the trialls of theſe oppoſite diſpoſitions; of the danger of ſleeping, and excellency of Heart-waking; and of the helps and means, both to ſhun the one, and preſerve the other. Now the Church having ſo freely and ingenuouſly confeſſed what he could againſt her ſelf, proceeds yet further to acquaint us with the particulars in her heart-waking diſpoſition: Which were two-fold, ſhe heard and diſcerned *the voice of her Beloved*, who for all her ſleep was her *Beloved* ſtill; and more then that, ſhe remembers all his ſweet words and allurements, whereby he preſſed her to open unto him, ſaying, *Open to me, my Love, my Dove, my Undefiled*; which is ſet out, and amplified

SERM. V.

plified with a further moving argument of thoſe inconveniences Chriſt had ſuffered in his waiting for entertainment in her heart. *For my head is filled with dew, and my locks with the drops of the Night.* All which aggravates her offence, and his rare goodneſſe and patience towards miſerable ſinners, ſo to wait from time to time for admiſſion into our wretched ſouls, that he may rule and govern them by his holy Spirit. Therefore we had great need to ſhun this ſleepy temper of ſoul, which for the preſent ſo locks up *the everlaſting gates of our ſoul, that the King of glory cannot enter in*; and to ſtrive for this bleſſed heart-waking diſpoſition, which may help us at all times to ſee our dangers, and by Gods bleſſing recover us out of them, as here the Church doth at length, though firſt ſmarting and well beaten by *the watch men*, in a world of perplexities, ere ſhe can recover the ſenſe of her former union and communion with Chriſt.

Pſal. 24.

And ſurely, we find by experience, what a wofull thing it is for the ſoul which hath once taſted how gracious the Lord is, to be long without a ſenſe of Gods love: For when it looks upon ſinne as the cauſe of this ſeparation, this is for the time as ſo many deaths unto it. Therefore the Churches experience muſt be our warning-peice to take heed how we grieve the Spirit, and ſo fall into this ſpirituall ſleep: Wherein yet this is a good ſigne, that yet we are not in a deſperate dead ſleep, when we can with her ſay,

*It is the voice of my Beloved that knocks, ſaying, Open unto me*, &c.

In which words you have,

1. *The*

SERM. V.

1. *The Churches acknowledgment of Christs voice.*

2. *Of his carriage towards her.*

1. *Her acknowledgment* is set down here. *It is the voice of my Beloved.*

2. His carriage, *He knocks*, &c. Wherein,

1. *His patience in suffering things unworthy and utterly unbeseeming for him.* He doth not onely *knock, but he continues knocking, till his head was filled with dew, and his locks with the drops of the night.*

2. *His friendly compellation, Open to me my love, my dove, my undefiled.* Loe here are sweet actions, sweet words, & all to melt the heart of the Spouse.

First, *the Churches acknowledgment* is to be considered, confessing, *It is the voice of her Beloed.* The first thing to be observed in this acknowledgment is, That the Church however sleepy and drowsie she was, yet notwithstanding her heart was so far awake, as to know the voice of her husband. The point is this:

*Observ.* *That a Christian soul doth know and may discern the voice of Christ, yea and that even in a lazie sleepy estate; but much more when in a good and lively frame.*

Ioh. 10. *Gods Believers are Christs sheep*: Now *my sheep* (saith Christ) *hear my voice.* It is the ear-marke (as it were) of a Christian, one of the characters of the n w man, *To taste words by the ear* (as *Job* saith:) Iob 12. 11. he hath a spirituall taste, a discerning relish in his ear, because he hath the Spirit of God, and therefore relisheth what is connaturall and suitable to the Spirit. Now the *voice* of Christ without in

SERM. V.

*Difference of Christians by a spirituall taste in hearing.*

the ministry, and the *Spirit of Christ* within in the heart, are connaturall and suitable each to other.

And surely so it is, *That this is one way to discern a true Christian from another, even by a taste in hearing*: For those that have a spirituall relish, they can hear with some delight things that are most spirituall. As the Heathen man said of a medow, that some creatures come to eat one sort of herbs, others an other, all that which is fit for them; Men to walk therein for delight; All for ends suitable to their nature: So in comming to hear the Word of God, some come to observe the elegancy of words and phrases; some to catch advantage (perhaps) against the speaker, men of a divellish temper; and some to conforme themselves to the custome of the places they live in, or to satisfie the clamours of a troubled conscience, that will have some divine duty performed, else it goes on with much vexation. But every true Christian comes, and relisheth what is spirituall: And when outward things can convey in similitudes spirituall things aptly to the minde, he relisheth this not as elegant, and pleasing his fancy so much, as for conveying the voice of Christ unto his soul. So that a man may much be helpt to know his state in Grace, and what he is, by his eare: *Itching eares* usually are such as are *led with lust*, as the Apostle saith, and they must be clawed. They are sick, and nothing will down with them, they quarrell with every thing that is wholesome, (as they did with *Manna*;) no Sermons will please them, no bread is fine and white enough; whereas indeed, it is their owne distemper is in fault. As those that goe in a ship upon

on the Sea; it is not the toſſing, but the ſtomach, that cauſeth a ſickneſſe; the choler within, and not the waves without: So the diſquiet of theſe men that nothing will down with them, is from their own diſtemper. If Chriſt himſelf were here a preaching, they would be ſure to cavill at ſomething, as then men did, when he preached in his own perſon; becauſe they labour of luſts, which they reſolve to feed and cheriſh.

And again, Obſerve it againſt our adverſaries: What ſay they? How ſhall we know that the Word is the Word of God? For this heretick ſaith thus, and this interprets it thus. This is the common objection of the great Rabbies amongſt them in their writings, how we can know the Word to be Gods, conſidering there are ſuch hereſies in the Churches, and ſuch contrariety of opinions concerning the Scriptures read in the Churches.

Even thus to object and ask, is an argument and teſtimony, that theſe men have not the Spirit of Chriſt; for, *His ſheep know his voice*: who, howſoever they cannot interpret all places of Scripture, yet they can diſcerne in the Scripture what is ſutable food for them; or in the unfolding of the Scriptures in preaching, they can diſcern agre a ble food for them, having a faculty to reject that which is not fit for nouriſhment, to let it go. As there are in nature paſſages fit for concoction, and digeſtion, and for rejection: ſo there is in the ſoul to worke out of the Word, even out of that which *is hard*, yet wholeſome, what is fit for the ſoul & ſpirit. If it be caſt down, it feeds upon the promiſes

Ioh. 10.

SERM. V.

miſes for direction and conſolation; and what is not fit nouriſhment that it rejects, that is, if it be of a contrary nature, *heterogeneal.* Therefore we anſwer them thus: That *Gods ſheep hear his voice,* That his Word left in the Church (when it is unfolded) his Spirit goes together with it, breeding a reliſh of the Word in the hearts of people, whereby they are able to taſte and reliſh it; and it hath a ſupernaturall power and Majeſty in it, which carries its own evidence with it. *How ſhall we know light to be light?* It carries evidence in it ſelf that it is light. *How know we that the fire is hot?* becauſe it carries evidence in it ſelf that it is ſo. So if you ask, *How we know the Word of God to be the Word of God? it carries in it ſelf inbred Arguments and Characters, that the ſoul can ſay, None but this word can be the Word of God, it hath ſuch a majeſty and power to caſt down, and raiſe up, and to comfort, and to direct with ſuch power and majeſty, that it carries with it its own evidence, and it is argument enough for it.* And thus we anſwer them, which they can anſwer no way, but by cavils. *Gods ſheep hear the voice of Chriſt;* He ſpeaks, and the Church underſtands him, *and a ſtrangers voice they will not hear, Ioh.* 10.5.

John 10.3.

1 Cor. 1 42,5.
2 Cor. 1 0.4

And indeed, this is the only ſure way of underſtanding the Word to be of God, from an inbred Principle of the majeſty in the Word, & a powerfull work thereof on the ſoul it ſelf, and an aſſent ſo grounded, is that which makes a ſound Chriſtian. If we ſhould ask what is the reaſon there be ſo many *that apoſtatize, fall away, grow prophane, and are ſo unfruitfull under the Goſpel,* notwithſtanding they

*Why ſo many apoſtatize.*

they hear ſo much as they do: The anſwer is, their ſouls were never founded & bottomed upon this, that it is the Word of God, and Divine Truth; ſo as to be able to ſay, I have felt it by experience, that it is the voice of Chriſt. Therfore they ſo ſoon Apoſtatize, let Jeſuites, or ſeducers ſet upon them; They were never perſwaded from inbred Arguments, that the voice of Chriſt is the Word of God: others from ſtrictneſſe grow prophane, becauſe they were never convinced by the power & majeſty of the truth in it ſelf; and then in the end they deſpaire, notwithſtanding all the promiſes, becauſe they were never convinced of the truth of them, they cannot ſay Amen to all the promiſes: But the Church can ſay confidently upon ſound experience, *It is the voice of my Beloved*, &c.

Again, Whereas the Church ſaith here, *It is the voice of my beloved*, &c. and knowes this voice of her Beloved, we may note:

*Obſerv.*

*That the Church of God, and every Chriſtian, takes notice of the means that God uſeth for their ſalvation.*

A Chriſtian is ſenſible of all the bleſſed helps he hath to ſalvation. To a dead heart, it is al one, whether they have means or no means, but a Chriſtian ſoul takes notice of all the means. *It is the voice of my Beloved that knocketh*; it ſeeth Chriſt in all.

*A diſtinction betwixt ſleep in divers Chriſtians, even at the worſt, and deadneſſe in a naturall man.*

And mark what the Church ſaith moreover, *It is the voice of my Beloved*, ſhe acknowledgeth *Chriſt to be beloved of her*, though ſhe were aſleep. So then here is a diſtinction between the ſleep of a Chriſtian, and the dead ſleep of another naturall man: The one when he ſleeps, *His heart doth not onely*

SERM. V.

*onely awake, but it is awake to discerne the voice of Christ*; it can relish in reading what is spirituall and good, what is savoury, and what not. And likewise take a Christian at the worst, when he is asleep, he loves Christ, he will do nothing against him. *I can do nothing* (saith *Paul*) *against the truth, but for the truth*; he will do nothing against the cause of Religion, there is a new Nature in him, that he cannot do otherwise, he cannot but love, he cannot sin with a full purpose, nor speak against a good cause, because he hath a new nature that leads him another way; Christ is her *Beloveds* still though she *sleep*.

*Observ.* *Take a Christian at the lowest, his heart yearnes after Christ,*

Acknowledging him to be his *Beloved*: There is a conjugall chastity in the soul of a Christian, holding firm to the covenant and marriage between Christ and it, he keeps that unviolable, though he may be untoward, sleepy, aud drowsie, yet there is alwayes a conjugall, spouse-like affection. *It is the voice of my Beloved*, &c.

Now leaving the Churches notice of the voice of Christ, *We come to Christs carriage towards her.*

1. *He knocketh*: and then we have

2. *His patience in that Carriage.*

*My head is filled with dew, and my locks with the drops of the night*, &c. Here is *Patience* and *Mercy* to endure this indignity at the Churches hand, to stand at her courtesie to come in; besides 3. the *Compellation*, afterwards to be spoken of. The generall observation from *Christs carriage*, is this:

*Observ.* *That Christ still desires a further and further Communion with his Church.*

Even

Even as the true ſoul that is touched with the Spirit, deſires nearer and nearer Communion with Chriſt: So he ſeeks nearer und nearer Communion with his Spouſe by all ſanctified meanes; Chriſt hath never enough of the ſoul; he would have them more and more open to him; our hearts are for Chriſt, who hath the heaven of heavens, & the ſoul of a believing Chriſtian for himſelf to dwell in; he contents not himſelf to be in heaven alone, but he will have our hearts. He knocks here, waits, ſpeaks friendly and lovingly with ſuch ſweet words, *My Love, my Dove*, &c. We had a bleſſed Communion in the ſtate of innocency, and ſhall have a glorious Communion in heaven, when the marriage ſhall be conſummated; but now the time of this life is but as the time of the contract, during which there are yet many mutuall paſſages of love between him and his Spouſe, a deſire of mutuall Communion of either ſide. Chriſt deſires further entertainment in his Churches heart and affection, that he might lodge and dwell there: And likewiſe there is the like deſire in the Church (when ſhe is in a right temper) ſo that if any ſtrangeneſſe be between Chriſt and any mans ſoul that hath taſted how good the Lord is, let him not blame Chriſt for it, for he delights not in ſtrangeneſſe; He that *knocks* and *ſtands knocking, while his locks are bedewed with the drops of the night*, doth he delight in ſtrangeneſſe, that makes all this love to a Chriſtians ſoul? Certainly, no.

*That the cauſe of chriſts ſtrangeneſſe to the Church is in our ſelves.*

Therefore look for the cauſe of his ſtrangeneſſe at any time in thine own ſelfe; As, *whether we*

SERM. V.

*we caſt our ſelves imprudently into company that are not fit to be conſulted withall*, in whom the Spirit is not, and who cannot do us any good, or they caſt themſelves to us. Evill company is a great dampning, whereby a Chriſtian loſeth his comfort much, eſpecially that intimate communion with God, whence we may fall into ſecurity.

Again, *Diſcontinuing of Religious exerciſes doth wonderfully cauſe Chriſt to withdraw himſelf*; He makes no more love to our ſouls, when we neglect the means, and diſcontinue holy exerciſes, and religious company, when we ſtirr not up the graces of gods ſpirit; being this way negligent, it is no wõder that Chriſt makes no more love to our ſouls; when we prize & value not the Communion that ſhould be between the ſoul & Chriſt, as we ſhould. *Whom have I in heaven but thee? Thy loving kindneſſe is better then life* (ſaith the Pſalmiſt:) when we prize not this, it is juſt with Chriſt to make himſelf ſtrange, *Where love is not valued and eſteemed, it is eſtranged, and for a while hides it ſelf.* So that theſe with other courſes and failings, we may find to be the ground and reaſon of the ſtrangeneſs between Chriſt and the ſoul: for certainly the cauſe is not in him; for we ſee here, he uſeth all means to be entertained by a Chriſtian ſoul, *he knocks.*

Pſal. 73. 25.

Pſal. 63. 3.

Lament. 3.

You know what he ſayes to the Church of *Laodicea*, *Rev.* 3. 20. *Behold, I ſtand at the door and knock*; So here, *It is the voice of my Beloved that knocketh*: therefore in ſuch a caſe, ſearch your own hearts, where if there be deadneſſe, and deſertion of Spirit, lay the blame upon your ſelves, and enter into a ſearch of your own wayes,

and

SERM. V.

and ſee what may be the cauſe.

Now to come more particularly to Chriſts carriage here, knocking at the heart of the ſleepy Church: We ſee, That *Chriſt takes not the advantage and forfeiture of the ſins of his Church, to leave them altogether, but makes further and further love to them*; though the church be ſleepy, Chriſt continues knocking. The church of *Laodicea* was a luke-warm, proud, hypocritical Church; yet, *Behold* (ſaith Chriſt) *I ſtand at the doore and knock*, and it was ſuch a Church as was vain-glorious, and conceited; *I am rich, and want nothing, when ſhe was poor, blind, and naked.* And here he doth not only ſtand knocking, but he withall ſuffereth indignities, *the dew* to fall upon him; which we ſhall ſpeak more of hereafter. Chriſt therefore refuſeth not weak ſinners; he that commands, *that we ſhould receive him that is weak in the faith*, and not caſt him off from our fellowſhip and company, will he reject him that is weak and ſleepy? No; what Father will paſſe by or neglect his child for ſome failings and weakneſſes? Nature will move him to reſpect him as his child.

*That Chriſt takes not the advantage and forfeiture of the ſinnes of his Church.* Rev. 3. 2, 10.

Now Chriſt is mercifull both by his office, and by his nature; our Nature he took upon him, that he might be a mercifull Redeemer. And then as God alſo he is love, *God is love*, that is, whatſoever God ſhews himſelf to his Church, he doth it in *love*: If he be angry in correcting, it is out of *love*; if *Mercifull*, it is out of *love*; If he be *Powerfull* in defending his Church, and revenging himſelf on her Enemies, all is *love*; *God is love* (ſaith *Iohn*) that is, he ſhews himſelf onely in wayes, expreſſions

Heb. 2. 17.
1 Ioh. 4. 16.

1 Ioh. 4. 8.

SERM. V.

expreſſions and characters of love to his Church: So Chriſt, as God, is all love to the Church. And we ſee the Scriptures alſo to ſet out God as love both in his Eſſence, and in his relations. 1. In Relation of love to his Church, he is a Father, *As a Father pittieth his child, ſo the Lord pitties them that feare him.* And 2. alſo in thoſe ſweet Attributes of *love*, which are his eſſence, as we ſee, *Exod.* 34.6. When God deſcribes himſelf to *Moſes* after his deſire to know him, in the former chapter, *Thou canſt not ſee me and live*; yet he would make him know him, as was fit for him to be known, *Iehovah*, *Iehovah*, *Strong*, *Merciſull*, *Gracious*, *Long-ſuffering*, &c. Thus God will be known in theſe Attributes of conſolation; So Chriſt as God, is all love & mercy: Likewiſe Chriſt as man, he was man for this end to be all love and mercy: Take him in his office, as *Ieſus* to be a Saviour, he carrieth ſalvation in his wings, as it is, *Mal.* 4. 2. both by Office, and by Nature.

Pſal. 105.

Exod. 34.6.

And here how excellently is the expreſſion of Chriſts mercy, love & patience ſet out? *He knocks, my Beloved knocketh*, &c. ſaying, He knocks for further entrance (as was ſhewed before) ſome he had already, but he would have further: As you know we have divers rooms and places in our houſes; There is the court, the hall, the parlour, and cloſet: The hall for common perſons, the parlour for thoſe of better faſhion, the cloſet for a mans ſelf, and thoſe that are intimate friends: So a Chriſtian hath roome in his heart for worldly thoughts, but his cloſet, his inmoſt affections, are kept for his inmoſt friend Chriſt, who is not content with the hall,

hall, but will come into the very cloſet; he knocks that we ſhould open and let him come into our hearts, into our more intimate affections and love; nothing will content him but intimateneſſe, for he deſerves it, as we ſhall ſee, he knocks for this end: But *how doth he knock?*

*How Chriſt is ſaid to knock at our hearts.*

Every kind of way: It is taken from the faſhion of men in this kind (God condeſcending to ſpeak to us in our own language) Sometimes you know, *There is a knocking or calling for entrance by voice*, when a voice may ſerve, and then there needs no further knocking.

*By a voice.*

Sometimes *both by voice and knocking*: If voice will not ſerve, knocking comes after: So it is here, Chriſt doth knock, and ſpeak, uſeth a voice of his Word, and knocks by his works, and both together ſometimes, whether by works of mercy or of judgment, he labours to enter into the ſoul to raiſe the ſleepy ſoul that way; he begins with mercy uſually. 1. By mercies, All the creatures and bleſſings of God carry in them (as it were) a voice of God to the ſoul, that it would entertain his love. There goes a voice of love with every bleſſing. And the love, the mercy, and the goodnes of God in the creature, is better then the creature it ſelf: as we ſay of gifts, *The love of the giver is better then the gift it ſelf*: So the love of God in all his ſweet benefits is better then the thing it ſelf, & ſo in that we have there is a voice (as it were) entreating us to entertain God and Chriſt in all his mercies yea every creature (as one ſaith) and benefit ſpeaks as it were thus to us; *we ſerve thee, that thou mayeſt ſerve him that made thee and us.* There is a ſpeech as

*Sometimes both by voice and knocking.*

SERM. V.

(as it were) in every favour, which mercies, if they cannot prevail, then come *corrections*, which are the voice of God also: *Heare the rod and him that smiteth.* But hath the rod a voice?

Micah 6. 9.

2. *By the rod which hath a voice in corrections.*

Yes, for what do corrections speak but amendment of the fault we are corrected for? so we must heare the rod; all corrections tend to this purpose, they are as knockings, that we should open to God & Christ. And because corrections of themselves will not amend us, God to this kind of knocking adds a voice, he teacheth and corrects together. *Happy is that man that thou correctest, and teachest out of thy Law* (saith the Psalmist.) Correction without teaching is to little purpose; therefore God adds instruction to correction. He opens the conscience so, that it tells us it is for this that you are corrected, and together with conscience, gives his Spirit to tell us it is for this or that you are corrected: you are to blame in this; this you have done that you should have not done: So that *Corrections are knockings*; but then especially when they have instruction thus with them. They are messengers from God, both blessings and corrections, *they will not away*, (especially corrections) till they have an answer; for they are sent of God, who will adde seven times more, and if the first be not answered, then he sends after them, he will be sure to have an answer, either in our conversion, or confusion, when he begins once.

Psal. 94. 10.

Levit. 29. 24.

3. *God knocketh by the good examples of others.*

Many other wayes he useth to knock at our hearts. *The examples of those we live among that are good they call upon us*; the patternes of their holy life. The examples of Gods justice upon others,

Luke 13. 2, 3. 1 Corinth. 10.

are

SERM. V.

are ſpeeches to us; God knocks at our door then; He intends our correction, when he viſits another, when if we amend by that, he needs not take us in hand.

4. *By his miniſteriall knocking.*

But beſides all this, there is a more near knocking that Chriſt uſeth to the Church, *His miniſteriall knocking*; when he was here in the dayes of his fleſh, he was a Preacher and Prophet himſelf, and now he is aſcended into heaven, he hath given gifts to men, and men to the Church, whom he ſpeaks by to the end of the world, they are Chriſts mouth, as we ſaid of the pen-men of holy Scripture; they were but the hand to write, Chriſt was the head to indite: So in preaching and unfolding the Word, they are but Chriſts mouth and his voice (as it is ſaid of *Iohn*) Now he is in heaven, he ſpeaks by them; *He that heareth you, heareth me; he that deſpiſeth you, deſpiſeth me.* Chriſt is either received or rejected in his Miniſters, as it is ſaid of *Noahs* time, *The Spirit of Chriſt preached in the dayes of* Noah *to the ſouls now in priſon*, &c. Chriſt as God did preach before he was incarnate, by *Noah* to the old world, which is now in priſon in hell, becauſe they refuſed to hear Chriſt ſpeake to them by *Noah*; Much more now after the dayes of his fleſh, that he is in heaven, he ſpeaks and preacheth to us, which if we regard not, we are like to be in priſon, as thoſe ſouls are now in priſon for neglecting the preaching of *Noah*; 1 *Pet.* 3. 19. So the Miniſters are Chriſts mouth, when they ſpeak he ſpeaks by them, and they are as Ambaſſadors of Chriſt (whom they ſhould imitate in mildneſſe) *We therefore as Ambaſſadors beſeech and intreat you*

Eph. 14.

Luke 10. 17.

2 Cor. 5. 20

SERM. V.

*you, as if Christ by us should speak to you; so we intreat you to be reconciled unto God.* And you know what heart-breaking words the Apostle useth in all his Epistles (especially when he writes to Christians in a good state) as to the *Philippians*, *If there*
Phil. 1. 2. *be any bowels of mercy, if there be any consolation in Christ*, then regard what I say, *be of one mind.* And among the *Thessalonians*, He was a Nurse to them:
1 Thes. 2. 19. So Christ speaks by them, and puts his own affections into them, that as he is tender, and full of bowels himself, so he hath put the same bowels into those that are his true Ministers.

He speaks by them, and they use all kind of meanes that Christ may be entertained into their hearts. They move all stones (as it were) sometimes *threatnings*, sometimes *intreaties*; sometimes they come *as sons of thunder*, sometimes *with the still voice of sweet promises*; And because one man is not so fit as another for all varieties of conditions and spirits, therefore God gives variety of gifts to his Ministers, that they may knock at the heart of every man by their severall gifts: For some have more rowzing, some more insinuating gifts; some more *Legall*, some more *Evangelicall* spirits, yet all for the Churches good. *Iohn Baptist* by a more thundering way of preaching, to make way for Christ to come, threatneth judgment. But Christ then he comes with a *Blessed are the*
Mat. 5. 3. *poor in Spirit*; *Blessed are they that hunger and thirst for Righteousnesse*, &c. All kind of meanes have been used in the Ministry from the beginning of the world.

And because of it selfe this Ministry it is a dead letter

letter, therefore he joyns that with the Word, which knocks at the heart together with the Word, not ſevered from it, but is the life of it: *Oh the Spirit is the life and ſoul of the Word*; and when the inward word, or voice of the Spirit, and the outward Word or Miniſtry go together, then Chriſt doth more effectually knock, and ſtir up the heart.

5. *By the Spirit*

Now this Spirit with ſweet inſpirations knocks, moves the heart, lightens the underſtanding, quickens the dull affections, and ſtirrs them up to duty, as it is, *Iſa.* 30. 21. *And thine ears ſhall hear a voice behind thee, ſaying, This is the way, walke in it.* The Spirit moves us ſweetly, agreeable to our own nature, it offers not violence to us: But ſo as in *Hoſea* 11.4. *I drew them by the cords of a man*; that is, by reaſons and motives befitting the nature of man, motives of love: So the Spirit together with the word, works upon us, as we are men, by rationall motives, ſetting good before us, If we will let Chriſt in to governe and rule us; and by the danger on the contrary, ſo moving, and ſtirring up our affections: Theſe be *the cords of a man.*

6. *The Conſcience alſo knocks.*

And beſides his Spirit, God hath planted in us a *Conſcience* to call upon us, to be his Vicar, a little God in us to do his Office, to call upon us, to direct us, check, and condemne us, which in great mercy he hath placed in us.

Thus we ſee what means Chriſt uſeth here; *His voice, works*, and *words*, works of *Mercy* and of *Correction*, his *Word* together with his *Spirit*, and the *Conſcience*, that he hath planted to be (as it were) a God in us, which together with his Spirit may

SERM. V.

move us to duty. This *Auſtin* ſpeaks of, when he ſaith, *Deus in me*, &c. *God ſpake in me oft, & I knew it not*; He means it of Conſcience, together with the Spirit, ſtirring up motives to leave his ſinful courſes. God knocked in me, & I conſidered it not. I cried, *modò* and *modò ſine modo*; I put off God, now I will, and now I will, but I had no moderation, I knew no limits. And whilſt Chriſt thus knocketh, all the three perſons may be ſaid to do it: For as it is ſaid elſewhere, *that God was and is in Chriſt reconciling the world*, &c. For whatſoever Chriſt did, he did it as anointed, and by office: And therefore God doth it in Chriſt, and by Chriſt, and ſo in ſome ſort God died in his humane nature when Chriſt died. So here the Father beſeecheth when Chriſt beſeecheth, becauſe he beſeecheth that is ſent from him, and anointed of the Father: And God the Father ſtoops to us when Chriſt ſtoops, becauſe he is ſent of the Father, & doth all by his Fathers command and commiſſion. So beſides his own bowels, there is the Father and the Spirit with Chriſt, who doth all by his Spirit, and from his Father, from whom he hath commiſſion. Therefore God the Father, Sonne, and Holy Ghoſt knock at the heart, *Open to me my Love, my Dove, my Undefiled*; but Chriſt eſpecially by his Spirit, becauſe it is his office.

2 Cor. 5. 5. 19

Act. 206.

John 5.

*Object.* But ſome may object, *Chriſt can open to himſelf, why doth not he take the key and open, and make way for himſelf? Who will knock, when he hath the key himſelf? and who will knock, when there is none within to open? Chriſt can open to himſelfe, and we have no free-will, nor power to open.*

*Bellarmine*

SERM. V.

*Answ. Why Christ knocks, though he hath power to open to himself, and bids us open, who want power to doe it.*

*Bellarmine* makes this objection, and speaks very rudely, that he is an unwise man to knock, where there is no man within to open; and that if Christ knock and we cannot open, it is a delusion to exhort to open, and that therefore there must needs be free-will in us to open.

The Answer is: First, Christ speaks to the Spouse here, and so many such exhortations are given to them that have the Spirit of God already, who could by the help thereof open: For good and gracious men are moved first by the Spirit, and then they move; they are *Moti moventes*, and *Acti agentes*; They are acted first by the Spirit, and then they do act by it, not of themselves: as the inferiour Orbes move not, but as they are moved by the superiour. The Question is not of them in the state of Grace, but at their first conversion, when especially we say that Christ speaks to them that he means to convert, *He knocks at their hearts, and opens together with his speech*: Then there goes a power, that they shall open, for his words are operative words; as it was in the Creation, *Let there be light*, it was an operative word, *and there was light*. Let there be such a Creature, it was an operative working word, and there was such a Creature presently: So he opens together with that word: With that invitation and command, there goes an Almighty power to enable the soul to open. Were it not a wise reason to say, When Christ called to *Lazarus to come forth*, that we should reason had he life to yeeld to Christ, when he bade him come forth? no, he was rotten in his grave almost; but with Christs speaking to *Lazarus*, there went

1.

2.

Gen. 11. 3.

Iohn. 11. 43.

SERM. V.

went an Almighty power, that gave life to him, by which life he heard what Christ said said, *Arise Lazarus*: So Christ by his Spirit clothes his word in the Ministery, when he speaks to people with a mighty power: as the Minister speaks to the ear, Christ speaks, opens, and unlocks the heart at the same time, and gives it power to open, not from it selfe, but from Christ. *Paul* speaks to *Lydia's* ear, Christ to her heart, and opened it, as the Text says, whereby she beleeved; so Christ opens the heart.

Act. 16.13.

*Quest.* But, *Why doth he thus worke?*

*Answ.* Because he will preserve Nature, and the principles thereof, and so he deals with us, working accordingly; the manner of working of the reasonable creature is to worke freely by a sweet inclination, not by violence. Therefore when he works the worke of Conversion, he doth it in a sweet manner, though it be mighty for the efficaciousnesse of it, he admonisheth us with intreaty and perswasion, as if we did it our selves. But though the manner be thus swet, yet with this manner there goeth an Almighty power. Therefore he doth it strongly, as coming from himselfe, and sweetly, as the speaking is to us, preserving our Nature, so the Action is from him, which hath an Almighty power with it; As holy *Bernard* saith, *Thou dealest sweetly with my soul in regard of my selfe* (that is, thou workest upon me as a man with the words of love) *yet strongly in regard of thy selfe.* For except he add strength with sweetnesse, the work will not follow; but when there are both, an Almighty worke is wrought in the soul of a Christian; & so wrought, as the manner of mans working is preserved

*Bernard.*

SERM. V.

ſerved in a ſweet and free manner, whilſt he is changed from contrary to contrary; And it is alſo with the greateſt reaſon that can be, in that now he ſees more reaſon to be good, then in the days of darkneſſe he did to be naught. God works ſo ſweetly: God ſpeaks to us after the manner of men, but he works in us as the great God; he ſpeaks to us as a man in our own language, ſweetly; but he works in us almightily, after a powerfull manner, as God: ſo we muſt nnderſtand ſuch phraſes as theſe, *I knock, open to me my Love, my Dove, &c.* We may take further notice,

*Obſerv.* *That the heart of a Chriſtian is the houſe and Temple of Chriſt.*

Iſai. 57.13. He hath but two houſes to dwell in; the *Heavens*, and *the heart of an humble broken-hearted ſinner.*

*Queſt.* *How can Chriſt come into the ſoul?*

*Anſw.* He comes into the heart by his Spirit; It is a ſpeciall entertainment that he looks for: open thine ears, that thou maiſt hear my word: thy love, that thou maiſt love me more: thy joy, that thou maiſt delight in me more: open thy whole ſoul, that I may dwell in it. A Chriſtian ſhould be Gods houſe, & a true Chriſtian is the true Temple of God. He left the other two Temples therefore, but his own body, & his Church he never leaves; for an houſe is for a man to ſolace himſelfe in, and to reſt in, and to lay up whatſoever is precious to him: So with Chriſt. A man will repair his houſe, ſo Chriſt will repair our ſouls, and make them better, and make them more holy and ſpirituall, and every way fit for ſuch a gueſt as he is.

*How ſhall we know whether Chriſt dwels in our hearts or not?*

We may know by the ſervants what Maſter dwels in an houſe: If Chriſt be in the ſoul, there comes out of the houſe good ſpeeches; and we watch the ſenſes, ſo as there comes nothing in to defile the ſoul, and diſturb Chriſt, & nothing goes out to offend God. When we hear men full of gracious ſweet ſpeeches, it is a ſigne Chriſt dwels there: If we hear the contrary, it ſhews Chriſt dwels not there, for Chriſt would move the whole man to doe that which might edifie and comfort.

Again, where Chriſt comes, *Aſſiſtance comes there.* When Chriſt was born, all *Jeruſalem* was in an uproare: ſo when Chriſt is born in the ſoul, there is an uproare, corruption armes it ſelfe againſt Grace, there is a combate betwixt fleſh and ſpirit, but Chriſt ſubdues the fleſh by little and little. Gods image is ſtamped upon the ſoul where Chriſt is, and if we have opened unto the Lord of Glory, he will make us glorious.

Chriſt hath never enough of us, nor we have never enough of him, till we be in heaven, and therefore we pray, *Thy Kingdome come*, and till Chriſt comes in his Kingdome, he deſires his Kingdome ſhould come to us: *Open* (ſaith he;) *Stupenda dignatio*: &c. (as he cryes out) it is a ſtupendious condeſcending, when he that hath Heaven to hold him, Angels to attend him, thoſe glorious creatures; he that hath the command of every creature, that doe yeeld preſently homage when he commands, the Froggs and Lice, and all the Hoſt of Heaven are ready to doe his will; for him to condeſcend, and to intreat us to be good to our own ſouls, and to beſeech

beſeech us to be reconciled to him, as if he had offended us, who have done the wrong,& not he; or as if that we had power & riches to doe him good: Here *Greatneſſe* beſeecheth *Meanneſſe*; *Riches*, *Poverty*; *All-ſufficiency*, *Want*; and *Life* it ſelfe comes to *dead drowſie ſouls*. What a wondrous condeſcending is this! yet notwithſtanding Chriſt vouchſafes to make the heart of a ſinfull ſleepy man to be his *Houſe*, his *Temple*; He *knocks*, and *knocks* here, ſaying, *Open to me, &c.* SERM. V.

This is uſefull many ways, as firſt, cheriſh all the good conceits we can of Chriſt; Time will come that the devill will ſet upon us with ſharp temptations, fiery darts, temptations to deſpair, and preſent Chriſt amiſſe, as if Chriſt were not willing to receive us, when as you ſee he knocks at our hearts to open to him, uſeth *Mercies* and *Iudgments*, *the Miniſtery of his Spirit and Conſcience*, *and all*: Will not he then entertain us when we come to him, that ſeeks this entertainment at our hands? Certainly he will; therefore let us labour to cheriſh good conceits of Chriſt. This is the finiſher and beginning of the converſion of a poor ſinfull ſoul, even to conſider the infinite love and condeſcending of Chriſt Jeſus for the good of our ſouls: We need not wonder at this his willingneſſe to receive us, when we firſt know that God became man, happineſſe became miſery, & *life it ſelfe came to die, and to be a curſe for us*. He hath done the greater, and will he not doe the leſſe? Therefore think not ſtrange that he uſeth all theſe means, conſidering how low he deſcended into the womb of the Virgin for us, *Epheſ.* 4. 9. *Uſe.* Gal. 3 13.

Now

SERM. V.

Now ſuch conſiderations as theſe being mixed with the Spirit, & ſet on by him, are effectual for the converſion of poor ſouls. Is there ſuch love in God to become man, and to be a ſuitor to wooe me for my love? Surely, thinks the ſoul then, he deſires my ſalvation, and converſion: and to what kind of perſons doth he come? None can object unworthineſſe, I am poor; *he comes to the poor*: I am laden and wretched; *Come unto me all ye that are weary and laden*: I have nothing; *Come and buy hony, milke, and Wine, though you have nothing.* He takes away all objections. But I am ſtung with the ſenſe of my ſins; *Bleſſed are they that hunger and thirſt, &c.* But I am empty of all; *bleſſed are the poor in ſpirit.* You can object nothing, but it is taken away by the holy Ghoſt, wiſely preventing all the objections of a ſinfull ſoul: this is the beginning of converſion, theſe very conceits; and *when we are converted, theſe thoughts entertained with admiration of Chriſts condeſcending, are effectuall to give Chriſt further entrance into the ſoul,* whereby a more happy communion is wrought ſtill more and more between Chriſt and the ſoul of a Chriſtian.

Iſai. 61. 1.
Ma. 11.28.
Iſai. 55.1.
Matth. 5. 3,5.

*Uſe* 2.

Oh, but take heed that theſe make not any ſecure; For if we give not any entrance to Chriſt, all this wil be a further aggravation of our damnation. How wil this juſtify the ſentence upon us hereafter when Chriſt ſhall ſet us on the left hand, and ſay, *depart from me,* for I invited you to come to me; I knocked at the door of your hearts, & you would give me no entrance; *Depart from us,* ſaid you, therefore now, *Depart you from me?* What doe prophane perſons in the Church, but bid Chriſt depart

Mat. 25.

depart from them? eſpecially in the motions of his Spirit: they entertain him in the outward roome, the brain, they know a little of Chriſt; but in the heart, the ſecret room, he muſt not come there to rule. Is it not equall, that he ſhould bid us, *Depart ye curſed, I know you not?* you would not give entrance to me, I will not now to you; as to the fooliſh Virgins he ſpeaks. And *Prov.* 1.28. VViſedome knocks, and hath no entrance, therefore in times of danger they call upon her, but ſhe rejoyceth at their deſtruction; where God magnifies his mercy in this kind in ſweet allurements, and inviting by Judgments, Mercies, Miniſtery, and Spirit, he will magnifie his Judgments after. Thoſe that have neglected Heaven with the Prerogatives and advantages in this kind, they ſhal be caſt into Hell. *Woe to thee Chorazin, &c.* as you know in the Goſpell. This is one thing that may humble us of this place and Nation, that Chriſt hath no further entrance, nor better entertainment after ſo long knocking: for the entertaining of his word is the welcomming of himſelf, as it is *Coloſſ.* 3. 16. *Let the word of God dwell plentifully in you. And let Chriſt dwell in your hearts by faith, Epheſ.* 3. 17. Compare thoſe places, let the word dwell plenteouſly in you by wiſedome, and let Chriſt dwell in your hearts by faith: For then doth Chriſt dwell in the heart, when the truth dwels in us: therefore what entertainment we give to his truth, we give to himſelfe. Now what means of knocking hath he not uſed among us a long time? For *works* of all ſorts; he hath drawn us *by the cords of a man*, by all kind of favours: For *Mercies*; How many deliverances

SERM. V.

Mat. 23, 41.

Mat. 11. 21.

Serm. V.

rances have we had (No Nation the like, we are a miracle of the Christian world) from forraign invasion, and domesticall conspiracies at home? How many mercies doe we enjoy? *Abundance together with long peace and plenty.* Besides, if this would not do, God hath added corrections with all these, in every Element, in every manner, infection in the aire, Iudgments in inundations; VVe have had rumors of wars, &c. threatnings, shakings of the rod onely, but such as might have awaked us: And then he hath knocked at our hearts by the example of other Nations. By what he hath done to them, he hath shewed us what he might justly have done to us; we are no better then they.

As for his *Ministeriall knocking*, above threescore years we have lived under the Ministery of the Gospell, this Land hath been *Goshen*, a Land of light, when many other places are in darkness, especially we that live in this *Goshen*, this place, and such like, where the light shines in a more abundant measure. Ministers have been sent, and variety of gifts, there hath been piping and mourning (as Christ complains in his time) that they were like froward children, that neither sweet piping, nor dolefull mourning would move to be tractable to their fellows; they had *Iohn* who came mourning, and Christ comforting with blessing in his mouth; all kind of means have been used.

Mat. 11.17.

And for the *Motions of his Spirit*, who are there at this time, who thus live in the Church under the Ministery, who cannot say that God thereby hath smote their hearts, those hard rocks, again and again, and awaked their consciences, partly with corrections,

corrections publick and perſonall, and partly with benefits; yet notwithſtanding what little way is given to Chriſt? Many are indifferent and luke-warme either way, but rather incline to the worſt. Let us then conſider of it, The greater means, the greater judgments afterwards, if we be not won by them. Therefore let us labour to hold Chriſt, to entertain him, let him have the beſt roome in our ſouls to dwell in our hearts; let us give up the keys to him, and deſire him to rule our underſtandings, to know nothing but him, and what may ſtand with his Truth, not to yield to any error or corruption; let us deſire that he would rule in our wils and affections, ſway all, give all to him; for that is his meaning when he ſays, *Open to me*, ſo that I may rule as in mine own houſe, as the husband rules in his family, and a King in his Kingdome, he will have all yielded up to him: And he comes to beat down all whatſoever is exalted againſt him, and that is the reaſon men are ſo loth to open unto him. They know if they open to the Spirit of God, he will turne them out of their fooles Paradiſe, and make them reſolve upon other courſes of life, which becauſe they will not turn unto, they repell the ſweet motions of the Spirit of Chriſt, and pull away his Graces, building bulwarks againſt Chriſt, as luſts, ſtrange imaginations and reſolutions. Let the Miniſters ſay what they will, and the Spirit move as he will, thus they live, and thus they will live. Let us take norice therefore of all the meanes that God uſeth to the State, and to us in particular, and every one labour to amend one.

1 Cor. 10.

Every

Every ſoul is the Temple, the houſe Chriſt ſhould dwell in, let every ſoul therefore among us conſider what means Chriſt uſeth to come into his ſoul to dwell with him, and to rule there.

*Conſiderations inforcing us to entertain Chriſt.*

And what ſhall we loſe by it? Do we entertain Chriſt to our loſſe? doth he come empty? No, he comes with all Grace; his *Goodneſſe* is a communicative, diffuſive goodneſſe; *He comes to ſpread his Treaſures, to enrich the heart with all Grace and ſtrength to bear all afflictions, to encounter all dangers, to bring peace of Conſcience, and joy in the Holy Ghoſt; he comes* (indeed) *to make our hearts* (as it were *an Heaven.* Do but conſider this, he comes not for his own ends, but to empty his goodneſſe into our hearts, as a breaſt that deſires to empty it ſelf when it is full. So this fountain hath the fulneſſe of a fountain, which ſtrives to empty his goodneſſe into our ſouls; he comes out of love to us. Let theſe conſiderations melt our hearts for our unkindneſſe, that we ſuffer him to ſtand ſo long at the door knocking, as it is ſaid here.

If we find not our ſuits anſwered ſo ſoon as we would, remember we have made him alſo wait for us; perhaps to humble us, and after that to encourage us, he will make us wait, for we have made him wait. Let us not give over, for certainely he that deſires us to open, that he may powre out his graces upon us, he will not reject us when we come to him if he anſwers us not at firſt, yet he wil at laſt let us go on and wait, ſeeing there is no one duty preſſed more in Scripture then this, and we ſee it is equity, *He waits for us*, it is good reaſon we ſhould wait for him; if we have not comfort preſently when

Mat. 7. 7. Habak. 2. 3.

Iſai. 30. 18.

when we deſire it, let us attend upon Chriſt, as he hath attended upon us, for when he comes, he comes with advantage; ſo that when we wait we loſe nothing thereby, but are gainers by it, increaſing our patience. The longer we wait, he comes with the more abundant Grace and comfort in the end, and ſhews himſelfe rich and bountifull to thē that wait upon him.

SERM. VI.
Iſai. 60. 16.
Iſai. 6. 4, 3.
Jam. 14.
Iſai. 40.

# The ſixth Sermon.

## CANT. 5. Ver. 11.

*It is the voice of my Beloved that knocketh, ſaying, Open unto me, my love, my dove, my undefiled,* &c.

IN the firſt part of this verſe hath been handled the Churches own condition which ſhe was in, after ſome bleſſed feelings that ſhe had of the love of Chriſt.

Now in the next words the Church ſets down an acknowledgment of the carriage of Chriſt to her in this her ſleepy condition. *It is the voice of my Beloved that knocks*, ſaying, *Open to me my ſiſter, my love, my dove*, &c. She acknowledgeth Chriſts voice in her ſleepy eſtate, and ſets down his carriage thus, *how he knocks*, and then alſo ſpeaks, *Open to me*; and then ſets down what he ſuffered for her, *My head is filled with dew, and my locks with the drops of the night*. And that nothing might be wanting that might move her heart to reſpect this his carriage

SERM. VI.

carriage towards her, he uſeth ſweet titles, a loving compellation, *Open to me* (ſaith he) *my ſiſter, my Love, my Dove, my Undefiled*, as ſo many cords of love to draw her: ſo here wants neither loving carriage, ſweet words, nor patience; *It is the voice of my Beloved that knocketh.*

The Church as ſhe takes notice of the voice of Chriſt, ſo ſhe doth alſo of the means he uſeth, and ſeeth his love in them all. *It is the voice of my Beloved that knocketh*, ſaying, *Open to me*, &c. Here is alſo another diſtinguiſhing note of a ſound Chriſtian from an unſound: A ſanctified Spirit ſees Chriſt in the means; this is, ſayes the heart the word of Chriſt, and this the mercy of Chriſt, to take ſuch pains with my ſoul, to ſend his Miniſters to provide his Ordinances to give gifts to men, and men to the Church. *It is the voice of my Beloved that knocketh.*

Ephes. 4. 12.

*That Chriſts knocking is eſpecially the Miniſtery of the Word.*

But we muſt eſpecially underſtand it of the Miniſteriall voice, whereby Chriſt doth cheifly make way for himſelf into the heart, and that by all kind of ways diſpenſed therein; as gifts of all ſorts, ſome tougher, ſome milder; all kind of Methods and ways in the Miniſtery to make way for himſelf: Firſt of all, by the threatnings of the Law, and by terrours, as *Iohn* was ſent before Chriſt, and as the ſtorme went before the ſtill and calme voice, wherein God came to *Elias*; ſo he uſeth all kind of courſes in the Miniſtery; and Miniſters by the direction of the Spirit turn themſelves, as it were, into all ſhapes and faſhions, both of ſpeech and Spirit, to win people to God; inſomuch that God appeals to them, *What could I*

1 King. 19. 12.

Iaiah 5. 1.

*have*

*have done more for my Church, that I have not done?*

Therefore let us take notice of this voice of Christ in the word, and not to think as good *Samuel* thought, that *Eli* spake when God spake; let us think that God speaks to us in the Ministry, that Christ comes to wooe us, and win us thereby. SERM. VI. Isai. 5.1. *Use.* 1 Sam. 3.5.

And we Ministers are the friends of the Bridegroom, who are to hear what *Christ* saith, and would have said to the Church, and we must pray to him, that he would teach us what to teach others. We are to procure the contract, and to perfect it till the marriage be in heaven, that is our worke.

And you that are hearers, if you doe not regard Christs sweet voice in the Ministry, which God hath appointed for the government of the world, know, that there is a voice that you cannot shake off, that peremptory voice at the day of judgement, when he will say, *Goe ye cursed into hell fire, &c.* And that God who delights to be styled *a God hearing prayer*, will not heare thee, but saith, *Such an one as turnes his eare away from hearing the Law, his prayer is abominable.* It is a dolefull thing, that he that made us, and allureth us in the Ministry, that follows us with all evidences of his love, and adds together with the Ministry many sweet motions of his Spirit, that he should delight in the destruction of his creatures, and not endure the sight of them, *Depart away from me ye cursed into hell fire*, &c. There are scarce any in the Church but Christ hath allured at one time or other to come in, and in many he opens their understandings in a great measure, and knocks upon their Mat. 25. Prov. 28.9.

SERM. VI.

hearts, that they as it were halfe open unto *Christ*, like *Agrippa* that said to *Paul*, *Thou almost perswadest me to be a Christian.* So *Herod did many things, and he heard gladly.* They are halfe open, seeme to open, but are not effectually converted, but at last they see, that further yeelding will not stand with that which they resolve not to part with, their lusts, their present condition that they make their God, and their heaven; whereupon they shut the door again, when they have opened a little to the motions of Gods Spirit, they dare give to further way, because they cannot learn the first lesson in *Christs* schoole, to deny themselves, and take up their crosse.

Act. 26. 28. Mark 6. 20.

This is an undoubted conclusion, our blessed Saviour giveth such means and motions of his Spirit to the vilest persons in the Church, that their own hearts tell them, they have more means and sweeter motions then they yeeld to, and *that the sentence of condemnation is not pronounced upon them for meerely not knowing of Christ, but upon some grounds of rebellion*, in that they goe not so farr as they are provoked and put on by the Spirit of God, they resist the holy Spirit. *There can be no resistance where there is not a going beyond the desire and will of him whom he resisteth.* A man doth not resist, when he gives way as far as he is moved. There is no wicked man in the Church, that gives so much way as he is moved and stirred to by the Spirit and word of God.

Act. 7. 31.

Away then with these impudent ungracious Objections about Gods Decree, for matter of Election, let us make it sure, and for any ill conceits that may

may riſe in our hearts about that other of reprobation, let this damp them all, that in the Church of God, he offers unto the vileſt wretch ſo much means with the motions of his Spirit, as he reſiſting, proves inexcuſable, his own rebellion therefore being the cauſe of his rejection. Let men ceaſe from cavilling, God hath that in their own breaſt, in the heart of every carnall man, which will ſpeak for God againſt him, and ſtop his mouth that he ſhall be ſilent and ſpeechleſſe at the day of judgment. SERM. VI.

Thus we ſee that Chriſt doth condeſcend ſo low as to account it almoſt a part of his happineſſe to have our ſouls for a Temple to dwell in, to rule there. Therefore he makes all this earneſt ſuit with ſtrong expeſſions, what he ſuffereth. Mat. 22. 12.

And ſince Chriſt bears this great and large affection to his poor Church, it may encourage us to pray heartily for the ſame, and to ſpread before God the ſtate thereof. *Why Lord? it is that part of the world that is thy ſiſter, thy love, thy dove, thy undefiled, the communion with whom thou loveſt above all the world beſides.* It is a ſtrong argument to prevail with God; therefore let us commend the ſtate of the Church at this time, or at any time, with this confidence, *Lord, it is the Church that thou loveſt.* They thought they prevailed much with Chriſt, when they laboured to bring him to *Lazarus*, ſaying, *Lord, He whom thou loveſt is ſick.* So ſay we, *The Church whom thou loveſt, that is thy only love, in whom thy love is concentrate* (as it were) *and gathered to an head* (as though thou hadſt no other *love* in the world but thy *Church*) *this thy love is in this ſtate and condition.* It is good to think of Iohn 11. 3. *Simile.*

SERM. VI.

prevailing arguments, not to move God so much as our own hearts, to strengthen our faith to prevaile with God, which is much fortified with the consideration of Christs wondrous loving expression to his poor Church. Then come to Christ, offer thy selfe, and he wil meet thee. Are not two loving well-wishers well met? *When thou offerest thy selfe to him, and he seeks thy love, will he reject thee when thou comest to him* that seeks thy love, & seeketh it in this passionate, affectionate manner, as he doth? Therefore be of comfort, he is more willing to entertain us, then we are to come to him.

*That the relapsed need not desperately to be discouraged.*

And for those that have relapsed any kind of way, let them not be discouraged to return again to Christ; the Church here was in a drowsy sleepy estate,, and used him unkindly, yet he is so patient that he waits her leisure, as it were, and saith, *Open to me my Sister, my Love, &c. Thomas* was so untoward that he would not believe, *Unlesse he did see the print of the nails, &c.* in Christs body; yet Christ was so gracious, as he condescendeth to poor *Thomas*: so to *Peter* after he was fallen, and to the Church after back-sliding,

*Open to me my Sister, &c.*

*Observ.*

Hence observe further.

*That Christ hath never enough of his Church till he hath it in Heaven*, where are indeed the kisses of his Spouse, & of Christ: In the mean while *Open, Open* stil. Christ had the heart of the Spouse in some measure already, but yet there were some corners of the heart that were not so filled with Christ as they should be, he was not so much in her understanding, will, joy, delight, and love, as he would

would be; therefore, *Open thy understanding more and more* to embrace me, and divine truths that are offered thee; *Open thy Love*, to solace me more and more: For God in Christ having condescended to the terms of friendship, nay to intimate terms of friendship in marriage with us, therefore as the Church in her right temper, hath never enough of Christ, but desires further union and communion still. It being the description of the people of God, that *they love the appearance of Christ*, as they loved his first appearance, and waited for the *consolation of Israel*: so they love his second appearing, & are never quiet till he comes again in the flesh, to consummate the marriage begun here: so Christ also he is as desirous of them, yea they are his desires that breed their desires, *Open to me my Sister, my Love, my Dove, &c.* Again, his *love* and *pity* moves him to desire further to come into us: Christ knows what is in our hearts, if he be not there, there is that that should not be there. What is in the brain where Christ is not? a deale of worldly projects nothing worth. What is in our joy, if Christ be not there? worldly joy, which cleavs to things worse then it selfe. If a man were anatomized, and seen into, he would be ashamed of himselfe, if he did see himselfe: Christ therefore out of pity to our souls, would not have the Devill there; Christ knows it is good for our souls to give way to him, therfore he useth all sweet allurements, *Open to me my Sister, my Love, &c.* Christ hath never his fill, till he close with the soul perfectly, so that nothing be in the soul above him, nothing equall to him, therefore, *Open, Open* still.

2 Tim. 4. 18. Rev. 22. 20.

Again, he sets down to move the Church, the more to open to him, the inconveniencies that he endured, *My head is filled with dew, &c.* wherein he shews what he suffered, which sufferings are of two sorts: *In himselfe, in his Ministers.* In himselfe, and in his own blessed person what he did endure; what patience had he in enduring the refractory spirits of men when he was here? how many indignities did he digest in his Disciples after their conversion? Towards his latter end, his head was not onely filled with the drops, but his body filled with drops of blood. Drops of bloud came from him, because of the anguish of his Spirit, and the sense of Gods wrath for our sinnes. Upon the Crosse, what did he endure there? that sense of Gods anger there was onely for our sins. *My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?* Mat. 27. What should we speak of his going up and down, doing good, preaching in his own person, setting whole nights apart for prayer? And then for what he suffers in his Ministers? there he knocks, and saith, *Open in them.* And how was he used in the Apostles that were after him, and in the Ministers of the *Church* ever since? What have they endured? for he put a spirit of patience upon them. And what indignities endured they in the Primitive *Church*, that were the publishers of the Gospell? those sweet publishers thereof, drawing men to open to *Christ*, were killed for preaching. So cruel is the heart, that it offereth violence to them that love them most, that love their souls. And what greater love then the love of the soul? yet this is the Satanicall temper & disposition of mens hearts, they hate those men most

most that deale this way most truly and lovingly with them. It is not that the Gospell is such an hard message. It is the word of reconciliation, and the word of life; but the heart hates it, because it would draw men from their present condition and therefore *condemnation is come into the world, in that men hate the light, because their works are evill.* Is there any thing truly and cordially hated but Grace? and are any persons heartily and cordially hated in the world so much as the Promulgers and Publishers of Grace, and the Professors of it, because it upbraids most of all, and meddles with the corruptions of men, that are dearer to them then their own souls?

Joh. 3. 19.

Now what patience is there in *Christ*, to suffer himselfe in his Messengers, and his children to be thus used? Nor is it strange to say that Christ stands thus in his Ministers, for 1 *Pet.* 3. 19. it is said, *That Christ by his Spirit preached in the days of* Noah *to the souls now in prison*: Christ preached in *Noahs* time before he was Incarnate, much more doth he preach now, and as he was patient then to endure the old World, unto whom *Noah* preached an hundred and twenty years; so he is patient now in his Ministers, to preach still by the same Spirit, even to us still, and yet the entertainment in many places is (as *Paul* complains) *Though the more I love you, yet the lesse I am beloved of you.*

2 Cor. 12. 13.

*Use* 1.

*Let these things move us to be patient towards God and Christ, if we be corrected in any kind*, considering that Christ is so patient towards us, and to wait upon him with patience. How long hath he waited for our conversion, how long doth he still

SERM. VI.

wait for the through giving up of our ſouls to him? Shall we think much then to wait a little while for him?

*Uſe 2.* *And let this Spirit of Chriſt ſtrengthen us likewiſe in our dealing with others,* as to beare with evill men; and as it is, 2 *Tim.* 2. 25, 26. *To wait if God will at any time give them repentance.* Neither may we be ſo ſhort-ſpirited, that if we have not an anſwer preſently, to give over. We ſhould imitate Chriſt here, never give over as long as God continues life, with any advantage and opportunity to doe good to any ſoul; wait, if God at any time will give them grace. *Open to me, my Siſter, my Love, &c.*

*Let this again work upon us, that our Saviour Chriſt would here thus ſet forth his Love, and his patience in his love,* in bearing with us thus under the reſemblance of a ſilly ſuiter that comes a far off, & ſtands at the door & knocks, that Chriſt ſhould ſtoop thus in ſeeking the good of our ſouls. Let this win, and quicken our hearts with all readineſſe and thankfulneſſe to receive him *when he comes to worke in our ſouls,* conſidering that Chriſt hath ſuch a care of us by himſelfe, his Miniſters and the motions of his Spirit, who joyns with his Miniſtry; let us not therefore be careleſs of our own ſouls, but let it move our hearts to melt to him. The motives may be ſeen more in the particular compellations, *Open to me my Siſter, my Love, &c.*

*My Siſter.*

This was ſpoken of before in the former verſe. The Church of God is Chriſts *Siſter* and *Spouſe,* we

we are knit to him both by *Consanguinity*, and by *Affinity*. The neareſt affinity is *Marriage*, and the neareſt conſanguinity is *Sister*. So that there are all Bonds to knit us to Chriſt; Whatſoever is ſtrong in any Bond, he knits us to him by it. Is there any love in an *Husband*, a *Brother*, a *Mother*, a *Friend*, in an *Head* to the members, in any thing in the world? Is there any *love* ſcattered in any relation? gather it all into one; and all that love, and a thouſand times more then that, is in Chriſt in a more eminent manner; therefore he ſtyles himſelfe in all theſe ſweet relations, to ſhew that he hath the love of all. Will a Sister ſhut out a Brother, when the Brother comes to viſit her, and doe her all good? Is this unkindneſſe even in Nature, to looke ſtrangely upon a man that is neere akin, that comes and ſaith, *Open to me my Sister*? If the Sister ſhould ſhut out the Brother, were it not moſt unnaturall? And is it not monſtrous in Grace, when our Brother comes for our good, and in pity to our ſoules, to let him ſtand without doores? Remember that Chriſt hath the ſame affections, to account us *Brothers* and *Sisters* now in heaven, as he had when we was upon the earth: For after his reſurrection (ſaith he to his Diſciples) *I goe to my God and to your God, to my father and to your father*; he cals himſelfe our Brother, having one common Father in Heaven, and one Spirit, and one inheritance, &c. This is a ſweet relation, Chriſt being our Brother, his heart cannot but melt towards us in any affliction: *Ioſeph* diſſembled a while out of politick wiſedome, but becauſe he had a Brothers heart to

SERM. VI.

Mathew. 12.

John. 20. 17.

Gen. 42.

Serm. VI.

to *Benjamin*, therefore at last he could not hold, but melted into tears, though he made his countenance, as though he had not regarded. So our *Joseph* now in Heaven, may seem to withdraw all tokens and signs of brotherly love from us, & not to own us, but it is only in shew, he is our brother stil, his heart first or last will melt towards his Brethren to their wonderfull comfort, *My Sister, &c.*

*My Love.*

That word we had not yet. It is worthy also a little standing on, for all these foure words be (as it were) the attractive cords to draw the Spouse, not only by shewing what he had suffered, but by sweet titles, *My Love, my Dove.*

What had Christ no love but his Spouse? did his love goe out of his own heart to her, as it were? It is strange, yet true; Christs love is so great to his Church and Children, and so continuall to it, that his Church and People, and every Christian soul is the seat of his love, *That love in his own breast being in them, they are his love*, because he himselfe is there, and one with them.

Ioh. 17. *ult.*

He loves all his creatures, they have all some beams of his goodnesse, *Which he must needs love*, therefore he loves them as creatures; and as they be more or lesse capable of a higher degree of goodnesse; but for his Church and Children, they are his love indeed.

*But what is the ground of such love?*

1. *He loves them as he beholds them in his Fathers choice*, as they are Elected of God, and given unto himselfe in Election; *Thine they are, thou gavest them me.* Christ looking on us in Gods Election and choice, loves us.

1. Ioh. 17. 6.

2. Again,

SERM. VI.

2. Again, *He loves us, becauſe he ſees his own Graces in us*, he loves what is his in us. Before we be actually his, he loves his with a *love of good will*, to wiſh all good to us; but when we have any thing of his Spirit, that our natures are altered and changed, he loves us with a love of the intimateſt friendſhip; with the love of an *Head*, *Husband*, *Friend*, and what we can imagine; he loves his own Image. *Paul* ſaith, *That the wife is the glory of her Husband*, becauſe whatſoever is in a good Husband the Wife expreſſeth it by reflection. So the *Church is the glory of Chriſt*, ſhe reflects his excellencies, though in a weak meaſure, they *ſhew forth his vertues* or praiſes, as *Peter* ſpeaks: thus he ſees his own Image in her, and the Holy Ghoſt in his Church, he loves her, and theſe in her: ſo as whether we regard the Father, or himſelfe, or his Spirit, the Church is his *Love*. 2. 1 Cor. 1. 17.

3. *If we conſider alſo what he hath done and ſuffered for her*, we may well ſay the Church is his *Love*. Beſides the former favours (not to ſpeak of Election) he chooſed us before we were: In time he did chuſe us by actuall Election, by which he called us: we had an exiſtence, but we reſiſted, he called us when we reſiſted, and then alſo he juſtified us, & clothed us with his own Righteouſneſſe, and after feeds us with his own body. As the ſoul is the moſt excellent thing in the world, ſo he hath provided for it the moſt excellent ornaments. It hath food and ornaments proportionable. VVhat love is this that he ſhould feed our ſouls with his own body, and clothe us with his own Righteouſneſſe. *He loved me* (ſaith *Paul*) what was the effect of his love? *He* Gal. 2. 20.

*gave*

SERM. VI.

*gave himselfe for me.* He gave himselfe both that we might have a Righteousnesse to clothe us with in the sight of God, and he gave himselfe, that he might be the bread of life, *My flesh is meat indeed, and my blood is drink indeed.* The guilty, the selfe-accusing soul feeds upon Christ dying for its sins. Again, *Rev.* 1. 6. you have his love set forth, *He loved us*; and how doth he witnesse it? *He hath washed us with his own blood, and hath made us Kings and Priests, &c.* The like you have, *Ephes.* 5. *He loved us, and gave himselfe a sweet Sacrifice to God for us.* When this world is at an end, we shall see what his love is; he is not satisfied, till we be all in one place. What doth he pray for to his Father? *Joh.* 17. 24. *Father, I will that those whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am, &c.* Run through all the whole course of Salvation, Election, Vocation, Justification, Glorification, you shall see his love in all of them. But it were an infinite argument to follow, to shew the love of Christ, which is beyond all knowledge, and it is too large for us to know all the dimensions of it, to see the height, breadth, depth, and length of it, which we should ever think, speake, and meditate of, because the soul is then in the most fit temper to serve, love, and glorifie God, when it is most apprehensive of his great love.

John. 6. 55.

Ephes. 4. 16.

*Deductions out of the word, Love.*

2.

This phrase imports divers things, *That there is no saving love to any out of the Church*, which is his *love*. It is (as it were) confined in the Church, as if all the beams of his love met in that centre, as we see when the beams of the Sunne meet in a glasse, they burn, because many are there united

united. So in the Church all his love doth meet. SERM. VI.

Then the Church is his love alſo, becauſe whatſoever ſhe hath or hopes for, is from his love, and is nothing but his love. The Church as it is a Church, is nothing but the love of Chriſt. That there is a Church ſo endowed, ſo graced, ſo full of the hope of glory, it is out of his love. 1.

And for the properties of it, It is a *free love*, a *preventing love*; he loved us before ever we could love him; he loved us when we reſiſted him, and were his enemies. *Properties of it*

It is *a moſt tender love*, as you have it, *Iſa.* 49. 15. *Can a mother forget her ſucking child? if ſhe ſhould, yet will I not forget thee: thou art written on the palms of my hands, &c.* He hath us in his heart, in his eye, in his hand, in a mothers heart, and beyond it; he hath a tender eye and a powerfull hand to maintain his Church. 2. Deut. 33. 2.

It is a *moſt tranſcendent*, and carefull love, all compariſons are under it. 3.

And it is *a moſt intimate, invincible love*, that nothing could quench it; as we ſee here the Church droopeth, & had many infirmities, yet ſhe is Chriſts love, ſo that the love of Chriſt is a kind of love that is unconquerable, no water will ever quench it, no ſin of ours, no infirmity: So as it is very comfortable, that the Church conſidered under infirmities, is yet the love of Chriſt; *I ſleep, but my heart waketh*, yet Chriſt comes with *my love, my dove, &c.* 4.

But what? cannot Chriſt ſee matter of weakneſſe, ſinfulneſſe, hatred, and diſlike in the Church? *Queſt.*

Oh yes, to pitty, help, and heale it, but not at all to diminiſh his love, but to manifeſt it ſo much *Anſw.*

the

Serm. VI.

the more. His love is a tender love ſenſible of all things wherewith we diſpleaſe him, yet it is ſo invincible and unconquerable that it overcomes all. Again, he ſees ill indeed in us, but he ſees in us ſome good of his own alſo, which moves him more to love, then that that is ill in us moves him to hate; for what he ſees of ours, he ſees with a purpoſe to vanquiſh, mortifie, & eat it out; the Spirit is as fire to conſume it; He is as water to waſh it, but what he ſees of his own, he ſees it with a purpoſe to increaſe it more and more, and to perfect it; therefore he ſays *my Love*, notwithſtanding that the Church was *aſleep*.

*Uſe.* This therefore ſerves greatly for our comfort, to ſearch what good Chriſt by his Spirit hath wrought in our hearts, what faith, what love, what ſanctified judgment, what fire of holy affections to him, and to the beſt things: O let us value our ſelves by that that is good, that Chriſt hath in us. We are Chriſts love notwithſtanding we are ſleepy, if we be diſpleaſed with this our ſtate, that as Chriſt diſlikes it, ſo if we by the Spirit diſlike it, the matter is not what ſin we have in us, but how we are affected to it. Have we that ill in us, which is truely the grief of our hearts and ſouls, which as Chriſt diſlikes, ſo we abhor it, and would be purged, and rid of it, and it is the grief of our hearts and ſouls, that we cannot be better, and more lovely in Chriſts eye? then let us not be diſcouraged: For Chriſt eſteems of his Church highly even as his *very love*, even at that time when ſhe was ſleepy: And may teach us in time of temptation not to hearken to Satan, who then moves us

us to look altogether upon that which is naught in us, thereby to abate our love to Christ, and our apprehension of his to us; for he knows if we be sensible of the love of Christ to us, we shall love him again. For love is a kind of fire, an active quality which will set us about glorifying God, and pulling down Satans kingdome: As we say in nature *(fire doth all)* what worke almost can a man work without fire, by which all instruments are made and heated? &c. So grace doth all with *love*; God first doth manifest to our souls his love to us in Christ, and quicken us by his Spirit, witnessing his love to us, wherewith he warms our hearts, kindles and inflames them so with love, that we love him again, which love hath a constraining sweet violence to put us upon all duties, to suffer, to doe, to resist any thing. If a man be in love with Christ, what will be harsh to him in the world? the devill knows this well enough, therefore one of his main engines and temptations is to weaken our hearts in the sense of Gods love and of Christs; therefore let us be as wise for our souls as he is subtile and politick against them; as watchfull for our own comfort, as he is to discomfort us, & make us despair. Let us be wise to gather all the arguments of Christs love that we can.

*Quest.* *But how shall we know that Christ loves us in this particular manner?*

*Answ.* Heb. 12. First, search what course he takes, and hath taken to draw thee neerer unto him; *he chastiseth every one that he loveth.* Seasonable corrections sanctified are a signe of Christs love, when he wil not suffer us to thrive in sin, when we cannot speak nor do amiss,

Serm. VI.

miſs, but either he laſheth us in our conſcience for it, & by his Spirit checks us, or elſe ſtirs up others, one thing or other to make us out of love with ſin.

2. Again, we may gather Chriſts love by this, if we have any love to divine things, and can ſet a great price upon the beſt things, upon the word, becauſe it is Chriſts word, upon grace, prizing the image of Chriſt, and the new creature; when we can ſet an high value upon Communion with Chriſt, the ſenſe of his love in our hearts, and all ſpirituall prerogatives, & excellencies above all things, this is an excellent argument of Chriſts love to us; Our love is but a reflection of his, and therefore if we have love to any thing that is good, we have it from him firſt. If a wall that is cold become hot, we ſay, the *Sun* of neceſſity muſt ſhine on it firſt; becauſe it is nothing but cold ſtone of it ſelfe. So if our hearts, that are naturally cold, be heated with the love of divine things, certainly we may ſay, Chriſt hath ſhined here firſt; for naturally our hearts are of a cold temper, there is no ſuch thing as ſpirituall love growing in our natures and hearts.

You have many poore ſouls helped with this, who cannot tell whether Chriſt loves them or no; but this helps them a little, they can find undoubted arguments of their love to Chriſt, his Image and ſervants, and of reliſhing the word, though they find much corruption; and this their love to divine things, tells them by demonſtrations from the effects, *that Chriſt loves them*, becauſe there is no love to divine and ſupernaturall things without the love of Chriſt firſt. And the graces in our hearts

hearts, they are love-tokens given to the Spouſe. Common favous he gives, as *Abrahams* gifts to his ſervants and others, but ſpeciall gifts to his Spouſe: If therefore there be any grace & a tender ſoft heart, a prizing of heavenly things, love to Gods people and truth, then we may comfortably conclude Chriſt loves us, not onely becauſe they are reflections of Gods love, but becauſe that they are jewels and ornaments that Chriſt onely beſtowes upon his Spouſe, and not upon reprobates, ſuch precious jewels as theſe. SERM. VI.

*By diſcovering his ſecrets to us*, for that is an argument of love. Doth Chriſt by his Spirit diſcover the ſecret love he hath born to us before all worlds? doth he diſcover the breaſt of his Father, and his own heart to us? this diſcovery of ſecret affections, of entire love, ſheweth our happy ſtate; for that is one prerogative of friendſhip, and the chiefeſt, diſcovery of ſecrets, when he gives us a particular right to truths, as our own, that we can goe challenge them, theſe are mine, theſe belong to me, theſe promiſes are mine; this diſcovery of the ſecret love of God, and of the intereſt we have in the promiſes, is a ſign that Chriſt loves us, and that in a peculiar manner we are his love. 3. Ioh. 15. 15. Pſalm 25.

Let us be like our bleſſed Saviour, that where we ſee any ſaving goodneſſe in any, let us love them; for ſhould not our love meet with our Saviours love? Shall the Church of God be the love of Chriſt, and ſhall it be our hatred? Shall a good Chriſtian be Chriſts love, and ſhall he be the object of my hatred and ſcorn? can we imitate a better pattern? O let us never think our eſtate to be *Uſe* 1. 1. *Reproofe.*

Ser. VI.

good, except every child of God be our love, as he is Christs love! Can I love Christ, and cannot I love him in whom I see Christ? It is a sign that I hate himselfe, when I hate his Image. It is to be wondered at, that the Devill hath prevailed with any so much, as to think that any should be in a good estate, when they have hearts rising against the best people, and who as they grow in grace, so they grow in their dislike of them. Is here the Spirit of Christ? And let them likewise be here reproved, that are glad to see any Christian halt,

2. *Reproof* 1.

slip, and goe awry. The best Christians in the world have that in part, which is wholly in another man; he hath flesh in him. Shall we utterly distaste a Christian for that? The Church was now in a sleepy condition, and yet notwithstanding Christ takes not the advantage of the weaknesse of the Church, to cashеere and to hate her; but he pities her the more, and takes a course to bring her againe into a good state and condition. Let us not therefore be glad at the infirmities and failings of any that discover any true goodnesse in them; it may be our case ere long, it casts them not out of Christs love, but they dwell in his love still, why should we then cast them out of our love and affections? Let them be our *love* still, as they are the *love* of Christ, notwithstanding their infirmities.

The

# The ſeventh Sermon.

CANT. V. II, III.

*My Love, my Dove, my undefiled; for my head is filled with dew, and my locks with the drops of the night.*

*I have put off my coat, how ſhall I put it on? I have waſhed my feet, how ſhall I defile them?*

THat the life of a Chriſtian is a perpetual on-flicting, appears evidently in this Book, the paſſages whereof joyned with our own experiences, ſufficiently declare what combats, tryals, and temptations the Saints are ſubject unto after their new birth and change of life, now up, now down, now ful of good reſolutions, now again ſluggiſh and ſlow, not to be awaked, nor brought forwards by the voice of Chriſt, as it was with the Church here, ſhe will not out of her ſleep to open unto Chriſt, though he call and knock, and ſtand waiting for entrance. She is now deſirous to pitty her ſelfe, and needs no *Peter* to ſtir her up unto it, the fleſh of it ſelfe is prone enough to draw back, & make excuſes to hinder the power of grace from its due operation in us. She is laid along (as it were) to reſt her; yet is not ſhe ſo aſleep, but ſhe diſcernes the voice of Chriſt, but up and riſe ſhe will not.

Thus we may ſee the truth of that ſpeech of our Saviour verified, *That which is born of the fleſh is fleſh, and that which is borne of the Spirit is Spirit.* Ioh. 3. 6.

Ser. VII.

The fleſh puls her back, the Spirit would raiſe her up to open to Chriſt; he in the mean while makes her inexcuſable, and prepares her by his knocking, waiting and departing, as for a ſtate of further *Humiliation* ſo for an eſtate of further *Exaltation*. But how lovingly doth he ſpeake to her?

*Open unto me my Love.*

*Why my Love.* 1. He cals her *my Love*, eſpecially for two reſpects; partly becauſe *his Love was ſetled upon her*, it was in his own breaſt, but it reſted not there, but ſeated it ſelfe upon, and in the heart of his Spouſe, ſo that ſhe became Chriſts love. We know the heart of a lover is more where it loves then where it lives, (as we uſe to ſpeake) and indeed there is a kind of a going out (as it were) to the thing beloved, with a heedleſneſſe of all other things; where the affection is in any exceſſe, it carries the whole ſoule with it.

2. But beſides this, when Chriſt ſaith *my Love*, he ſhews, that as his love goes and plants, and ſeats it ſelfe in the Church, ſo it is united to that, and is not ſcattered to other objects. There are beams of Gods generall love ſcattered in the whole world; but this love, this exceeding love is onely faſtned upon the Church. And indeed there is no love comparable to this love of Chriſt, which is above the love of Women, of Father, or Mother, if we conſider what courſe he takes to ſhew it: For there could be nothing in the world ſo great to diſcover his love, as this gift, & gift of himſelfe; And therefore he gave himſelfe (the beſt thing in heaven or in Earth) withall to ſhew his love, *The Father gave him*. When he was God equall with his Father, he loved

loved his Church & gave himſelfe for it; how could he diſcover his love better then to take our nature to ſhew how he loved us? how could he come nearer to us, then by being incarnate, ſo to be bone of our bone, and fleſh of our fleſh, and took our nature to ſhew how he loved it? *Love draws things nearer whereſoever it is*; It drew him out of heaven to the Womb of the Virgin, there to be incarnate, & after that, when he was born, not onely to be a man, but a miſerable man, becauſe we could not be his Spouſe unleſſe he purchaſed us by his death. We muſt be his Spouſe by a ſatisfaction made to divine *Iuſtice*. God would not give us to him, but with ſalving his *Iuſtice*. What ſweet love is it to heale us not by ſearing, or lancing, but by making a plaiſter of his own bloud, which he ſhed for thoſe that ſhed his in malice and hatred? What a wondrous love is it, that he ſhould poure forth tears for thoſe that ſhed his bloud, *O Ieruſalem, Ieruſalem, &c.* that he prayed for thoſe that perſecuted him? and what wondrons love is it now that he ſympathiſeth with us in Heaven, accounting the harm that is done to the leaſt member he hath, as done to himſelfe? *Saul, Saul, why perſecuteſt thou me?* and that he ſhould take us in one body with himſelfe to make one Chriſt? and he doth not content himſelfe with any thing he can doe for us here. but his deſire is that we may be one with him more and more, and be for ever with him in the Heavens, as you have it in that excellent prayer, *Iohn* 17. 24.

Ephes. 5. 30.

Math. 23. 37.

Acts. 9. 4. 1 Cor. 12.

Now this ſhould ſtir us up to be fully perſwaded of his love that loves us ſo much. Chriſts love in us, is as the loadſtone to the iron, our hearts are

Ser. VII. heavy and downward of themſelves. We may eſpecially know his love by this, that it draws us upwards, and makes us heavenly minded, it makes us deſire further and further communion with him: ſtill there is a magneticall attractive force in Chriſts love, whereſoever it is, it draws the heart and affections after it.

*Uſe 2.* And we may know from hence one argument to prove the ſtability of the Saints, and the immortality of the ſoul, becauſe Chriſt cals the Church his *Love*: The want of love againe (where it is entire and in any great meaſure) is a miſery. Chriſt therefore ſhould ſuffer, if thoſe he hath planted his love upon, whom he loves truly, either ſhould fall away for ever, or ſhould not be immortal for ever: *Chriſt* will not loſe his love; & as it is an argument of perſevering in grace, ſo is it of an everlaſting being that this ſoul of ours hath, becauſe it is capable of the love of Chriſt, ſeeing there is a ſweet union, and communion between Chriſt and the ſoul. It ſhould make Chriſt miſerable (as it were) in Heaven, the place of happineſs, if there ſhould not be a meeting of him and his Spouſe; there muſt therefore be a meeting, which marriage is for ever, that both may be for ever happy one in another.

Hoſea 2. *Uſe* 3. Let us often warm our hearts with the conſideration hereof, becauſe all our love is from this love of his. Oh the wonderfull love of God, that both ſuch tranſcendent Majeſty, & ſuch an infinite love ſhould dwel together! (We ſay) *Majeſty* & *Love* never dwell together, becauſe, *Love is an abaſing of the ſoul to all ſervices.* But herein it is falſe; for here *Maieſty* and *Love* dwell together in the heart of

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one Chriſt, which Majeſty hath ſtooped as low, as his Almighty power could give leave. Nay, it was an Almighty power that he could ſtoop ſo low, and yet be God keeping his Majeſty ſtill. For God to become man, to hide his Majeſty for a while, not to be known to be God, and to hide ſo farr in this nature, as to die for us. What an Almighty power was this, that could goe ſo low, & yet preſerve himſelfe God ſtill? yet this we ſee in this our bleſſed Saviour, the greateſt Majeſty met with the greateſt abaſement that ever was, and all out of love to our poore ſouls: There was no ſtooping, no abaſement that ever was ſo low as Chriſt was abaſed unto us, to want for a time even the comfort of the preſence of his Father. There was an union of Grace, but the union of ſolace and comfort that he had from him, was ſuſpended for a time, out of love to us; for he had a right in his own perſon to be in Heaven preſently. Now for him to live ſo long out of Heaven, and oft-times, eſpecially towards his ſuffering, to be without that ſolace (that he might be a ſacrifice for our ſins) to have it ſuſpended for a time, what a condeſcending was this? It is ſaid, *Pſal.* 113. 6. that *God ſtoops to behold the things dône here below.* It is indeed a wondrous condeſcending that God will look upon things below; but that he would become man, and out of love to ſave us, ſuffer as he did here, this is wondrous humility to aſtoniſhment. We think humility is not a proper grace becoming the Majeſty of God: So it is not indeed; but there is ſome reſemblance of that grace in God, eſpecially in Chriſt, that he

Ser. VII.

should to reveale himselfe, vaile himselfe with flesh, and all out of love to us. The consideration of these things is wondrous effectuall, as to strengthen *Faith*, so to kindle *Love*. Let these be for a taste to direct our meditations herein. It followes.

*My Dove.*

Matth. 3.

We know when Christ was baptized, the Holy Ghost appeared in the shape of a Dove (as a symbole of his presence) to discover thus much,

1. That Christ should have the property and disposition of a *Dove, and be meek and gentle.* For indeed he became a man for that end to be a *mercifull Saviour.*

Matth. 11.22.

Matth. 12.20.

*Learn of me, for I am meek and lowly.* And *I will not quench the smoking flax, nor break the bruised reed, &c.* said he; and therefore the Spirit appeared upon him in the shape of a Dove.

2. As likewise to shew what his office should be; for even as the Dove in *Noahs Arke* was senr out and came home again to the *Arke* with an *Olive Branch*, to shew that the waters were abated: So Christ was to preach deliverance from the deluge of Gods anger, and to come with an Olive-leafe of peace in his mouth, and reconciliation, to shew that Gods wrath was appeased. When he was born, the Angels sung, *Glory to God on high, on earth peace, and good will towards men.*

Luk. 2. 14.

Now as Christ had the Spirit in the likenesse of a *Dove*: so all that are Christs, the Spouse of Christ, have the disposition of Christ; *that Spirit* that framed him to be like a *Dove*, frames the Church to be a *Dove*, *as the ointment that was poured on Aarons head it ran down upon the lowest skirts of his garments.*

Psalm 133. 3

Now the Church is compared to a *Dove*, partly,

*for*

*for the diſpoſition that is and ſhould be in the Church reſembling that creature*: And partly alſo *for that the Church is in a mournfull ſuffering condition.* 1. For the like diſpoſition as is found in a Dove. There is ſome good in all creatures; there is no creature but it hath a beame of Gods Majeſty, of ſome attribute; but ſome more then others. There is an Image of vertue even in the inferior creatures. Wherefore the Scripture ſends us to them for many vertues; as the ſluggard to the Ant: And indeed we may ſee the true perfection of the firſt Creation, the ſtate of it more in the creatures then in our ſelves, for there is no ſuch degeneration in any creature as there is in man.

*That every Creature hath in it ſome beam of the Majeſty of God.*

Now that which in a Dove the Scripture aimes at, *we ſhould reſemble a Dove in, is his meekneſſe eſpecially.* The Church is meek both to God and Man, not given to murmurings and revengement; *meek*, that is, *I held my tongue without murmuring* (as it is in the Pſalm) *I was dumb, &c.* which is a grace that Gods Spirit frames in the heart of the Church, and every particular Chriſtian even to be meek towards God by an *holy ſilence*; and likewiſe towards men to put on the *Bowels of meekneſſe*, as we are exhorted *Coloſſ.* 3. 12. *As the Elect of God put on the Bowels of meekneſſe and compaſſion, &c.* Hereby we ſhall ſhew our ſelves to be Chriſts, & to have the Spirit of Chriſt. And this grace diſpoſeth us to a nearer Communion with God then other graces: It is a grace that God moſt delights in, and would have his Spouſe to be adorned with, as is ſhewed, 1 *Pet.* 3. 4. where the Apoſtle tels women, it is the beſt jewell and ornament that they can

*Properties of the Dove.*

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*Meekeneſſe.*

Pſalm. 39. 2.

Ser. VII.

can weare, and is with God of *great price*. *Moſes* we read, was a mighty man in prayer; and a ſpeciall means to helpe and fit him thereunto, was, becauſe he *was the meekeſt man on earth*. And therefore, *Zeph.* 2.1, 2. *Seek the Lord, ſeek meekneſſe.* And it fits a man for communion with God: *For God reſiſteth the proud, and giveth grace to the meek and humble.* It is a grace that empties the ſoul of ſelfe-conceit, to think a mans ſelfe unworthy of any thing, and ſo makes it *capacious*, *low*, and fit for God to fill with a larger meaſure of his Spirit; it takes away the roughneſſe and ſwelling of the ſoul, that keeps out God and grace; therefore in that grace we muſt eſpecially be like this meek creature, which is no vindicative creature, that hath no way to revenge it ſelfe.

Num. 12. 3.

1. Pet. 5. 5.

Again, *It is a ſimple creature without guile*, it hath no way to defend it ſelfe, but onely by flight. There is a ſimplicity that is ſinfull, when there is no mixture of wiſedome in it. There is a ſimplicity that is a pure ſimplicity, and ſo God is ſimple; which ſimplicity of God is the ground of many other Attributes: For thereupon he is *Eternall*, becauſe there is nothing contrary in him, there is no mixture in him of any thing oppoſite: ſo that is a good ſimplicity in us, when there is no mixture of fraud, no duplicity in the ſoul; *A double-hearted man is inconſtant and unſtable in all his ways.* Now *ſimplicity* as it is a vertue, ſo we muſt imitate the *Dove* in it, for there is a ſinfull Dove-like ſillineſſe: For, *Hoſea* 7.11. *Ephraim is ſaid there to be like a ſilly Dove without heart; they call to Egypt, they goe to Aſſyria.* There is a fatall ſimplicity uſually going before deſtruction, when

Iames 1.8.

Ser. VII.

when we hate thoſe that defend us, and account them enemies, and relie more upon them that are enemies indeed then upon friends. So it was with *Ephraim* before his deſtruction, he *was a ſilly Dove without heart, he called to Egypt, and went to Aſſyria,* (falſe friends) that were enemies to the Church of God, yet they truſted them more then God or the Prophets. Men have a world of tricks to undermine their friends, to ruine them, and to deſerve ill of thoſe that would with all their hearts deſerve well of them, when yet in the mean time they can gratifie the enemy, pleaſe them, and hold correſpondency with them, as here *Ephraim* did. *Ephraim is a ſilly Dove, &c.* This therefore is not that which we muſt aime at; but to be ſimple and children concerning evill, but not in ignorance and ſimplicity that way.

3. *Faithfulneſſe.*

Again, *this creature is a faithfull creature*, that is mainly here aimed at, it is faithfull to the mate: So the Chriſtian ſoul, by the Spirit of God, it is made faithfull to Chriſt, it keeps the judgment chaſte, is not tainted with errors and ſins; he keeps his affection chaſte likewiſe, ſets nothing in his heart above Chriſt. *Whom hath he in Heaven but him, and what is there in Earth he deſires beſides him?* You know in the *Revelation*, the *Spouſe of Chriſt* is brought in like a *Virgin contracted*, but the *Romiſh Church* like a *whore*. Therefore the Church of God muſt take heed of the *Roman Church*, for that is not a *Dove*; we muſt be *Virgins*, who muſt keep chaſte ſouls to Chriſt, as you have it, *Rev.* 14. 4. *Thoſe that follow the Lamb whereſoever he goeth, they have not defiled themſelves with women*: the

Pſalm. 73. 25.

Revel. 14. 4.

Ser. VII.

the meaning is ſpirituall, namely that they have not defiled themſelves with Idolatry and ſpirituall fornication; they have chaſte hearts to Chriſt: ſo in this reſpect they reſemble the *Dove*. Theſe therefore that draw away from the love of Religion to mixture, to be *meretrices*, and harlots in Religion, they are not Chriſts Doves; as far as they yeeld to this, it is an argument that they have falſe hearts; Chriſts Church is a *Dove*, ſhe keeps cloſe and inviolate to him.

4. *Neatneſſe.*

Again, *this creature is of a neat diſpoſition*, it will not lodge where it ſhall be troubled with ſtench, and annoyed that way, and likewiſe feeds neatly on pure graine, not upon carrion, as you ſee in the *Arke*, when the *Raven* was ſent out, it lights upon carrion, of which there was plenty, and therefore never came into the *Arke* again: But the *Dove*, when ſhe went out, would not light upon carrion or dead things; and ſo finding no fit food came back again to the *Arke*: So the Chriſtian ſoul in this reſpect is like a *Dove*, that will not feed upon worldly carrion, or ſinfull pleaſures, but upon Chriſt and ſpirituall things. The ſoul of a carnall and a natural man uſeth to feed upon duſt, earth and earthly things, when the ſoul of a true Chriſtian, that hath the taſte of grace, feeds *neatly*, it will not feed on that which is baſe and earthly, but upon heavenly and ſpirituall things.

Gen. 8. 7.

*Simile.*

5. Iſai. 60. 8.

It is *gregaria avis*, a bird that loves communion & fellowſhip, as the Prophet ſpeaks, *Who are thoſe that flock to the windowes as Doves?* for ſo they uſe to flock to their houſes by companies. So the children of God love the Communion and fellowſhip one

one of another, & keep ſevered from the world, as ſoon as ever they are ſeparated from it, delighting in all thoſe of the ſame naturer. *Doves* will conſort with *Doves*, Chriſtians with Chriſtians, and none elſe, they can reliſh no other company: theſe & ſuch like properties may profitably be conſidered of the *Dove*. The much ſtanding upon theſe, were to wrong the intendment of the Spirit of God; to neglect them altogether, were as much. Therefore we have touched upon ſome properties onely. Ser. VII.

Now, *For the ſufferings of the Church*; it is like a *Dove*, in this, *The Dove is moleſted by all the birds of prey*, it being the common prey of all other ravenous birds: So the poore Church of God is perſecuted and moleſted; *Oh that I had wings like a Dove, &c.* (ſaith holy *David*) It is an old ſpeech, and it is for ever true, *That Crows and ſuch eſcape better then Doves*; The puniſhment that ſhould light on *Ravens*, ofttimes it lights on *Doves*: Thus Gods *Dove*, Gods *Church* is uſed. 2.

But, *What defence hath Gods poor Church?* Why no defence: But

Firſt, *flight*, even as the Dove hath nothing but flight, it hath no talons to wound, but it hath flight: ſo we are to flie to God as to our mountain, fly to the *Arke* that God may take us in. The Church of God hath no other refuge but to be houſed in God and Chriſt, he is our *Arke*. Prov. 18. 10.

Secondly, and to mourn; as *Hezekiah* ſaith of himſelfe, *Iſa.* 38. *He mourned as a Dove, and chattered like a Crane*. The ſtate of the Church of God is like the *Turtles*, to mourn in all afflictions, deſertions,

Ser. VII. ons, and moleſtations of wicked men, to mourn to God who hears the bemonings of his own Spirit in them; and woe to all other Birds, the birds of prey; when the *Turtles* doe mourn (becauſe of their cruelty) it is a preſage of ruine to them, when they force the *Turtle* to ſorrow and mourning.

3. And then thirdly, they have another refuge beſides *flight* and mourning, which is *to build high from vermine* that would otherwiſe moleſt them. Inſtinct teacheth them thus to eſcape their enemies by building high, and ſo to ſecure themſelves: So there is in Gods children a gracious inſtinct put, an Antipathy to the enemies of it, which tends to their ſafety, in that they mingle not themſelves with them. And likewiſe, God breeds in them a familiarity with himſelfe, and ſtirs them to build in him as on a rock, to be ſafe in him.

*Object.* But you will object, If the Church of God be his Dove, why is it ſo with it as it is, that God ſhould ſuffer his Love and his Dove, and his Turtle, thus (as it were) to be preyed upon? *Give not the ſoul of thy Turtle to the beaſts* (ſaith the Pſalmiſt:) If the Church were Gods Dove, he would eſteeme more of it then he doth, and not ſuffer it to be perſecuted thus.

Pſalm. 47.19.

God never forſakes his *Dove*, but is an *Arke* for it to fly to, a *Rock* for it to build on. The *Dove* hath always a refuge in God and in *Chriſt* in the worſt time. You have a notable place for this *Pſal.* 68. 13. *Though you have lien among the Pots* (that is) ſmeared and ſullied; *yet they ſhall be as the wings of a Dove covered with ſilver, and her feathers with yellow gold; when the Almighty ſcattered*

*Kings*

*Kings in it, it was white as the ſnow in Salmon.* So though the Church of God lies among the pots a while all ſmeared, and ſoiled, and ſullied with the ill uſage of the world; yet as long as it keeps it ſelfe a *Dove*, unſpotted of the filth of the world and ſin, though it be ſmeared with the ill uſage thereof, we ſee what God promiſeth here; *yet ſhall they be as the wings of a Dove covered with ſilver, and her feathers with yellow Gold.* So God will bring forth his *Dove* with glory out of all theſe abaſements at length. So much for the title of *Dove*. It followes,

*My undefiled.*

*Undefiled* is a high word to be applyed to the Church of God here, for the Church groaning under infirmities, to be counted perfect and undefiled; but *Chriſt* who judgeth aright of his Church, and knows beſt what ſhe is, he yet thus judgeth of her. But how is that? *The Church is undefiled* (eſpecially) *in that it is the Spouſe of Chriſt, and clothed with the robes of his Righteouſneſs.* For there is an exchange ſo ſoon as ever we are united to *Chriſt*, our ſins are upon him, and his Righteouſneſs is made ours; and therefore in *Chriſt* the Church is undefiled. *Chriſt* himſelfe the ſecond Perſon is the firſt lovely thing next the Father, and in *Chriſt* all things as they have relation to Him are loved, as they are in Him. *Chriſts* humane nature is next loved to the ſecond Perſon; it is united, and is firſt pure, holy, and beloved: Then becauſe the Church is *Chriſt* myſticall, it is neere to him, and (in a manner) as neare as that ſacred body of his, both making

Ser. VII. king up one Christ mysticall, and so is amiable, & beloved even of God himselfe, who hath pure eyes yet in this respect looks upon the Church as *undefiled.*

Christ and his Church are not to be considered as two, when we speake of this undefiledneſſe, but as one. And the Church having Christ with all that is Christs, they have the field, and the pearle in the field together; and Christ giving himselfe to the Church, he gives his Righteousneſſe, his perfection, and holineſſe, all is the Churches.

But how can it be the Churches, when it is not in the Church, but in Christ?

It is safe for the Church that it is in Christ, who is perfect and *undefiled* for us, to make us appeare so: And so it is in Christ the second *Adam* for our good: it is not in him as another person; but it is in Him, as the Churches head, that make both one Christ. The hand and the foot see not; but both hand and foot have benefit by the eye that sees for them. There is no member of the body understands, but the head does all for them. Put the case we have not absolute Righteousneſſe and undefiledneſſe in our own natures and persons inhering in us; yet we have it in Christ that is one with us, who hath it for our good: It is ours, for all the comfort and good that we may have by it; and thereupon, *The Church in Christ is undefiled*; yea even then when it feeles its own defilements. And here ariseth that wondrous contradiction that is found in a beleevers apprehension: The nature of faith is to apprehend *Righteouſneſſe*, in the sense of sinne;

*Happi-*

*Happineſs*, in the ſenſe of miſery, and favour in the ſenſe of diſpleaſure.

And the ground of it is, becauſe that at the ſame time, the ſoul may be in ſome meaſure defiled in it ſelfe, & yet notwithſtanding be undefiled in her head and Husband Chriſt. Hence the guilty ſoul, when it feeles corruption and ſinne, yet notwithſtanding doth ſee it ſelfe holy, and clean in Chriſt the Head, and ſo at once there is a conſcience of ſin, and no more conſcience of ſinne, as the Apoſtle ſaith, *Heb.* 10. 2. when we believe in Chriſt, & *are purged* with his bloud, that is, there is no more guilt of ſinne binding over to eternall damnation, yet notwithſtanding always there is a conſcience of ſinne, for we are guilty of infirmities, *And if we ſay we have no ſin, we lye and deceive our ſelves.* 1 Ioh. 1. 13.

But, *How can this be that there ſhould be conſcience of ſinne, and no conſcience of ſin, a ſinner, and yet a perfect Saint and undefiled?* *Obj.*

The conſcience knows its own imperfection, ſo it is defiled, and accuſeth of ſinne: And as it looks to Chriſt, ſo it ſees it ſelfe pure, and purged from all ſin; Here is the conqueſt, fight, and the victory of *Faith* in the deepeſt ſenſe of ſin, pollution and defilement in our ſelves; at the ſame time to ſee an abſolute & perfect Righteouſneſſe in *Ieſus Chriſt*. Herein is even the triumph of *Faith* whereby it anſwers God. And Chriſt who ſees our imperfections (but it is to purge and cleanſe them away, not to damn us for them) at the ſame time he ſees us in his own love, clothed with his Righteouſneſſe, as one with himſelf endowed with whatſoever he hath, his ſatisfaction and obedience being ours, as verily as *Anſw.* 1.

Ser. VII.

any thing in the world is. Thus he looks on us, and thus faith looks upon him too, and together with the ſight and ſenſe of ſinne at the ſame time, it apprehends Righteouſneſs, perfect Righteouſneſs, and ſo is undefiled. This is the main point in Religion, and the comfort of Chriſtians, to ſee their perfection in Chriſt Jeſus, and to be loſt in themſelves (as it were) and to be only *found in him, not having their own Righteouſneſs, but the Righteouſneſs of God in him.* This is a myſtery which none knows but a beleeving ſoul; none ſee corruption more, none ſee themſelvs freed more, they have an inward ſight to ſee corruption, and in inward faith to ſee God takes not advantage at it. And ſurely there can be no greater honor to Chriſt then this, in the ſenſe of ſin, of wants, imperfections, ſtaines, and blemiſhes, yet to wrap our ſelves in the Righteouſneſs of *Chriſt* God-man, and by faith being thus covered with the abſolute Righteouſneſs of Chriſt, with boldneſs to goe clothed in the garments of this our elder Brother to the Throne of Grace. This is an honor to Chriſt, to attribute ſo much to his Righteouſneſs, That being clothed therewith we can boldly break thrõgh the fire of Gods juſtice, and all thoſe terrible attributes, when we ſee them all (as it were) ſatisfied fully in Chriſt: For Chriſt with his Righteouſneſs could goe through the juſtice of God, having ſatisfied it to the full for us: And we being clothed with this his Righteouſneſs and ſatisfaction, may goe through too.

But beſides that, there is another undefiledneſs in the Church, in reſpect to which ſhe is called *undefiled,*

*defiled*, that is, *in purity of diſpoſition*, tending to perfection. And God reſpects her according to her better part, & according to what he will bring her to in due time. For we are choſen unto perfection, & to be holy in his ſight, and perfectly holy, undefiled & pure; we are not choſen to weak beginnings.

In chooſing us what did God aim at? Did he aime at theſe imperfect beginnings to reſt there? No, we were elected and choſen to perfection: For as it is in this naturall life, God purpoſed that we ſhould not onely have all the limbs of men, but grow from infancy to activeneſſe and perfection: As God at firſt intended ſo much for our bodies, no queſtion he intends as much alſo for the ſoule, that we ſhould not onely have the lineaments of Chriſtianity, a ſanctified judgment, with affections in part renewed; but he hath choſen us to perfection by degrees. As the ſeed firſt lies rotting in the ground, then grows to a ſtalke, and then to an eare: ſo Gods wiſedome ſhines here by bringing things by degrees to perfection and undefiledneſs. His wiſdome will have it thus, or elſe his power might have it otherwaies, becauſe he will have us to live by *Faith*, ro truſt his mercy in Chriſt, and not to the undefiledneſs that is begun in us, but to admire that which we have in Chriſt himſelfe.

And indeed it is the character of a judicious beleeving Chriſtian ſoul, that he can ſet a price, and value the Righteouſneſs of Chriſt out of himſelfe, labouring, living & dying to appear in that, & yet to comfort and ſuſtain himſelfe, during this conflict & fight between the fleſh & the Spirit, that in time this inherent *Grace* ſhall be brought to perfection.

SER. VII.

And Christ he looks upon us, as he means to perfect the work of Grace in us by little and little, as he meanes to purge and clense us, as *Ephes.* 5. 26,27. The end of Redemption is, that he might purge his Church, and so never leave it, till he have made it *a glorious Spouse in Heaven.* He looks upon us, as we should be ere long, and therefore we are said *to be dead in sinne,* while we are but dying to it. And (saith he) *you have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts thereof,* when we are but crucifying it; but it is said so, because it is as sure to be done, as if it were done already. As a man, when he is condemned, and going to his execution, he is a dead man: So there is a sentence passed upon sinne and corruption, it shall be abolished and die. Therefore it is dead in sentence, and is dying in execution. It is done, *They that are in Christ have crucified the flesh, with the lusts thereof.* It is as sure to faith as if it were done already. So we are said *to sit in heavenly places with Christ,* we are with him already: For Christ having taken us so neare in affection to himselfe, he wil never leave us, til he have made us such as he may have full contentment in, which is in Heaven, when the contract between him and us shall be fulfilled in consummation of the marriage. Thus faith looks, and Christ looks thus upon us: Which should comfort us in weakness, that God regards us not in our present imperfections, but as he meanes to make us ere long. In the mean time, that he may look upon us in love, he looks upon us in the obedience of his Sonne, in whom whatsoever is good shall be perfected at the last.

Gal. 5. 24.

Gal. 5. 24.

Eph. 2. 6.

What should we doe then, if Christ doth make his

his Church thus, *his Love, his Dove, his undefiled,* by making his love to meet in it as the Centre thereof, whereunto he doth confine all his love (as it were;) we ſhould confine our love to him again,& have no love out of Chriſt,ſince he hath no love out of us:There ſhould be an everlaſting mutuall ſhining and reflection between him and the ſoule. We ſhould lay open our ſouls to his love, (as indeed he deſires eſpecially the communion of our affections)we ſhould reflect love to him again: This perpetuall everlaſting entercourſe between Chriſt and his Spouſe,is her main happineſſe here, and her eternall happineſſe in Heaven; In looking on him,who hath done ſo much for us,he ſhines on us, and we look back again upon him.Doth Chriſt love us ſo intimately,and ſo invincibly, that no indignities nor ſinne could overcome his love; which made, that he endured that which he hates moſt, *to become ſinne for us*; nay the want of that, which was more to him then all the world, the want of the ſenſe of the favour of God for a time, *My God, my God, why haſt thou forſaken me?* Hath Chriſt thus infinitely loved us, and ſhall not we back again make him our love? In their degree the Saints of God have all done ſo. It was a good ſpeech of *Ignatius* the Martyr, *My love Chriſt was crucified.* So a Chriſtian ſhould ſay, *My love was crucified, my love dyed, my love is in heaven*: And for the things on earth, I love them as they have a beam of him in them, as they lead me to him; but he is my love, there my love is pitched, even upon him: this is the ground of theſe Scripture phraſes, *But our converſation is in*

1 Cor. 5. 21

SER. VII.

Phil. 3. 20. Col. 3. 1. *Heaven, from whence we looke for the Saviour, the Lord Ieſus Chriſt, &c. and ſet our affections on the things that are above.* Why? Chriſt our love is there; *The ſoul is more where it loves then where its reſidence is.* It dies (as it were) to other things, and lives in the thing it loves; therefore our thoughts and affections, our joy and delight ſhould be drawn up to Chriſt, for indeed his love hath ſuch a magneticall attractive force, that where it is, it will draw up the heavy iron, the groſſe ſoul, and make it heavenly; for there is a binding, a drawing force in this excellent affection of love.

*My Love, My Dove*, &c.

*Uſe* 2. There are all words of ſweetneſſe; he labours to expreſſe all the affection he can, for the conſcience is ſubject to upbraid, & to clamor much, to that there muſt be a great deale of perſwaſion, ſo ſtill the accuſing conſcience of a ſinner, to ſet it down, make it quiet, & perſwade it of Gods love. Therefore he uſeth all heavenly Rhetorick to perſwade and move the affections.

*Uſe* 3. In this that the Church is undefiled in Chriſt, Let us learn, when afflicted in conſcience, not ſo much to judge of our ſelves by what we feel in our ſelves, as by what faith ſuggeſts. In Chriſt therefore let us judge of our ſelves by what we are as in him: We are *poore* in our ſelves, but have *riches* in him; we *die* in our ſelves in regard of this life, but we have a *life* in him, an *eternall life*; and we are

1 Cor. 5. 20. *ſinners* in our ſelves, but we have a *Righteouſneſſe* in him, whereby we are righteous in his ſight. We are *fooliſh, unſkilfull*, and *ignorant* in our ſelves; but he is our *wiſedome* in all whatſoever is amiſs in

us.

us. Let us labour to ſee a full ſupply of our wants made up in Chriſt; this is to glorifie God as much as if we could fulfill the Law perfectly. If we were as *undefiled* as *Adam* was, we could not glorifie God more, then when we find our ſelves, and our conſcience guilty of ſinnes, yet thus by the Spirit of God to goe out of our ſelves, and to ſee our ſelves in Chriſt; and thus to caſt our ſelves on him, embrace him, and take that *gift of God* given us, Chriſt offered to us, becauſe God ſo commands, we honour God more, then if we had the obedience that *Adam* had at firſt before his fall: For now in the covenant of Grace, he will be glorified in his mercy, in his forgiving, forbearing, rich tranſcendent mercy; and in going beyond all our unworthineſſe and ſinnes, by ſhewing that there is a *Righteouſneſſe* provided for us, the *Righteouſneſſe* of *God-man*, whoſe obedience and ſatisfaction is more then our diſobedience, becauſe it is the *diſobedience* of man onely; but his *Obedience* and *Righteouſneſſe* is the *Obedience* and Righteouſneſſe of *God-man*: ſo it ſatisfieth divine juſtice & therefore ought to ſatisfie conſcience to the full: our faith muſt anſwer Chriſts carriage to us; we muſt therefore account our ſelves in him *undefiled*, becauſe he accounts us ſo, not in our ſelves, but as we have a being in him, we are *undefiled*.

Ioh. 4. 10.

Again, ſee here Chriſt accounts us (even in regard of habituall grace) *undefiled*, though we have for the preſent many corruptions. Let us therefore learn a leſſon of moderation of ſo excellent a teacher; let us not be aſhamed to learn of our Saviour. What Spirit ſhall we think they have,

Sect. VII. that will unchurch Churches, because they have some defilement, & unbrother brethren, accounting them no *Churches*, no *Brethren*, because they have some imperfections. Why, hath not Christ a quarrel to the Church then? is he blind? doth his love make him blind? no, he seeth corruption, but he seeth better things, somewhat of his own that makes him overlook these imperfections, because they are such as he means to mortfie, subdue, wear away, & to fire out by the power of his spirit, which as fire shall waste all those corruptions in time. So it is with the Church; put the case she hath some corruptions, that it be not with her as it should be, yet she is a Church notwithstanding. The Church of *Corinth* (we see) *Paul* stiles them *Saints* and *Brethren*, with all those sweet names, notwithstanding they had many corruptions among them.

1 Cor. 1.

*Use* 5. We have a company of malignant spirits worse then these a great deale, Atheisticall persons that have no Religion at all, who out of malice & envy watch for the halting of good Christians, who can see nothing but defilement in those that have any good in them, nothing but hypocrisie, mopishnesse, all that is naught; who if they can devise any blemish, put it upon them; whereas Christ sees a great deal of ill in the Church, but he sees it to pardon, subdue, & to pity the Church for it, & extolling magnifying its goodness. What spirits are those of, that watch to see imperfections in others, whom their hearts tel them are beter then they, that only disgrace them by it? for goodnes they wil see none.

*Use.* 6. And likewise it should teach us not to wrong our selves with false judgement. We should have a double

double eye, one eye to ſee that which is amiſſe in us, our own imperfections, thereby to carry our ſelves in a perpetuall humility; but another eye of Faith, to ſee what we have in Chriſt, our perfection in him, ſo to account of our ſelves, and glory in this our beſt being, that in him we have a glorious being, ſuch an one whereby God eſteems us perfect, and undefiled in him onely. The one of which ſights ſhould inforce us to the other, which is one end why God in this world leavs corruption in his children. Oh! ſince I am thus undefiled, ſhall I reſt in my ſelfe? Is there any harbor for me to reſt in mine own Righteouſneſſe? O no, it drives a man out of all harbour; Nay I will reſt in that Righteouſneſſe which God hath wrought by *Chriſt*, who is God-man; That will endure the ſight of God, being clothed with which I can endure the preſence of God: So this ſight of our own unworthineſſe and wants, ſhould not be a ground of diſcouragement, but a ground to drive us perfectly out of our ſelves, that by faith we might renew our title to that Righteouſneſſe, wherein is our eſpeciall glory. Why ſhould we not judge of our ſelves as Chriſt doth? Can we ſee more in our ſelves then he doth? yet notwithſtanding all he ſees he accounts us as *undefiled*.

Again, ſince he accounts us *undefiled*, becauſe he means to make us ſo, and now looks on us as we ſhall be; In all our foyles and infirmities, let us comfort our ſelves, it ſhall not be thus always with us. O! this fleſh of mine ſhall fall and fall ſtill, and ſhall decay as *Sauls* houſe, and the Spirit at the laſt ſhall conquer in all this. I am not choſen to

*Uſe 7.*

to this beginning, to this conflicting course of life; I am chosen to triumph, to perfection of Grace, this is my comfort. Thus we should comfort our selves, and set upon our enemies, and conflict in this hope of victory, I shall get the better of my self at the last. Imperfection should not discourage, but comfort us in this world; we are chosen to perfection Let us still rejoyce, in that *we are chosen to Sanctification*, which is a little begun, being an earnest of other blessings; let us not rest in the pledge or in the earnest, but labour for a further pledge of more strength and grace: For those that have the Spirit of Christ, will strive to be as much unspotted, and as heavenly as they can; to fit themselves for that heavenly condition as much as may be, when, because they cannot be in Heaven, yet they will converse there as much as they can; and because they cannot be with such company altogether, they will be as much as may be, labouring as they are able, to be that which they shal be hereafter. Imperfection contents them not, and therefore they pray still in the Lords Prayer, *Thy Kingdome come*. While there is any imperfection, their hearts are enlarged more and more, nothing contents them but perfection. And indeed God accounts us thus unspotted for this end, because he would encourage us. Where he sees the will and indeavour he gives the title of the thing desired.

Ver. 3. *I have put off my coat, how shall I put it on? I have washed my feet, how shall I defile them?*

Here is an ingenuous confession made by the Church of her own untowardnesse; notwithstanding all Christs heavenly Rhetorick and perswa-

sion

Ser. VII.

ſion that he did uſe, yet ſhe draws back and ſeems to have reaſon ſo to doe. *I have put off my coat, how ſhall I put it one again* to let thee in? *I have waſhed my feet, &c.* It is a phraſe taken from the cuſtome of thoſe hot countreys, wherein they uſed to waſh their feet. *I have waſhed my feet, how ſhall I defile them*, to riſe and open the doore to thee? There is a ſpirituall meaning herein, as if ſhe had ſaid, I have ſome eaſe by this ſleepy profeſſion, ſome freedome from evill tongues, and ſome exemption and immunity from ſome troubles I was in before. I was then perhaps too indiſcreet, now wilt thou call me again to thoſe troubles that I have wiſely avoided? No, *I have put off my coat, how ſhall I put it on? I have waſhed my feet, how ſhall I defile them?* I affect this eſtate very well; I am content to be as I am without further troubling of my ſelfe: Thus the Church puts off Chriſt. This I take to be the meaning of the words: That which is obſervable is this, That it is not an eaſie matter to bring the ſoul and Chriſt together into near fellowſhip. We ſee here how the Church draws back: for the fleſh moves either not to yeeld at all to duty, or to be cold, uncertain, and unſetled therein. The fleſh knows that a neare communion with Chriſt cannot ſtand with favouring any corruption, and therefore the fleſh will doe ſomething, but not enough, it will yeeld to ſomething, but not to that that it ſhould doe, to that communion and fellowſhip that we ought to have with Chriſt. To inſtance in ſome particulars, as a rule and meaſure to ſomewhat of which we ſhould be.

*Obſerv.* 1.

SER. VII.

A Christians life should be nothing but a communion and entercourse with Christ; a walking in the Spirit, and to be spirituall, and to savour the things of the Spirit altogether; he should study to adorn his profession by a lively and cheerefull performance of duty, and be examplary to others, and should be in such a frame, as he should *walke continually in the comforts of the Holy Ghost*, undismayed, and undaunted, *And abound in the fruits of the Spirit*, and doe all the good he can wheresoever he comes; He should *keep himselfe unspotted of the world*, goe against the stream, and be continually in such a temper, as it should be the joy of his heart to be dissolved and to be with Christ. One might goe on thus in a world of particulars which would be too long. If we could attain to this excellency, it were an happy life, a Heaven upon Earth, this we should aime at; wil the flesh endure this, think you? No, it wil not; wch you shal see more particularly in this next observation, wch is,

Mat. 5. 16
Acts 9. 39.

Iam. 1. 27.

2 Tim. 4. 8.

*Observ.* 2. That *One way, whereby the unregenerate part in us hinders this Communion with Christ*, and the shining of a beleever in a Christian course, *is by false pretences, reasons and excuses. I have washed my feet, I have put off my coat, &c.*

The flesh never wants excuses and pretences (there was never yet any came to hel, but they had some seeming pretence for their comming thither) to shift and shuffle off duties; there was never yet any careless sinful course, but it had the flesh to justifie it with one reason or other; and therefore it is good to understand the Sophisticall shifts of the flesh, and pretences and shews which it hath

hath; and as it is good to know the truth of God, and of *Chriſt* revealed in his Word, ſo is it to know the falſeneſſe and deceitfulneſſe of our own hearts, they are both myſteries almoſt alike, hard to be known. Labour we then more and more to know the falſehood of our own diſpoſition, and to know the truth of God. To give inſtance in a few particulars: You ſee in the Church, the difficulty of her communion with Chriſt comes from the idle pretences and excuſes ſhe hath. Every one hath his ſeverall pretexts, as his ſtate and condition is. We think we ſhould be loſers, if we give our ſelves to that degree of goodneſſe which others doe, whereas God doth curſe thoſe bleſſings which men get with neglect of duty to him. If we ſeek firſt the kingdome of Heaven, all other things that are good for us ſhall be caſt upon us.

*Object.* Thou ſhalt loſe the favour of ſuch an one.

*Anſw.* Never care for that favour thou canſt not keep with Gods favour; *the favour of man is a ſnare*, take heed of that favour that ſnares thee: thou loſeſt their favour and company; but thou gaineſt the favour of Chriſt, and company of Angels.

*Object.* But they will raile on thee, and reproch thee with thy old ſinns.

*Anſw.* Care not, *God will doe thee good for that*, as *David* ſaid, when *Shimei* curſed him.

*Object.* But I ſhall loſe my pleaſure.

*Anſw.* O but ſuch pleaſures end in death; they are but pleaſures of ſin for a ſeaſon, and thou ſhalt not loſe by the change: *The ways of wiſedome are pleaſant waeys*, one day religiouſly ſpent in keeping of a good conſcience, what a ſweet far well hath it? *joy is in*

SER. VII. *in the habitation of the Righteous. It becomes the Righteous to be joyfull.* How ever outwardly it ſeems, yet there is a Paradiſe within. Many ſuch objections the fleſh makes, ſome take ſcandall at the proſperity of the wicked, and affliction of the Saints, and from hence take occaſion to rot in the dregs of ſinne; but what ſaith Chriſt? *Happy is*
Mat. 11. 6. *the man who is not offended in me.* As for the proſperity of the wicked, envy them not, they ſtand in ſlippery places, & flouriſh like a green bay-tree, but preſently they vaniſh. Take no offence at them, nor at the croſſe, look not at this, but at the enſuing comfort; *Bleſſed are they that ſuffer for Righteouſneſſe*
Mat. 5. 10. *ſake*: bind ſuch words to your head as your crown; God reſerves the beſt comforts to the worſt times, his people never find it otherwiſe.

*Object.* I, but if I be thus preciſe, the times are ſo bad, I ſhall be alone.

*Anſw.* Complain not of the times when thou makeſt them worſe, thou ſhouldeſt make the times better; the worſe the times are, the better be thou, for this is thy glory, to be good in an evill generation. This was *Lots* glory: *Paul* tels what ill times they were; But ſaith he, *Our converſation is in Heaven, from*
Phil. 3. 20. *whence we look for a Saviour.* What brings deſtruction on Gods people, but their joyning with the wicked? When they joyned with the children of men, then came the floud: Theſe and the like pretences keep men altogether from goodneſſe, or elſe from ſuch a meaſure as may bring honour to God, and comfort to themſelves.

Or if men be great, why this is not honourable to doe thus, as you know what *Michal* ſaid to *David*,

*vid, How glorious was the King of Iſrael this day? like a foole, &c.* To attend upon the word of God with reverence, to make conſcience of Religion, O it ſtands not with greatneſſe, &c. But the Spirit of God anſwereth this in him, *I will yet be more vile for God.* It is a mans honor here to ſtand for God, and for good things; and it is our honor, that God will honor us ſo much.

2. *The excuſes of worldlings.*

Thoſe likewiſe that are *worldly* have excuſes alſo; *Alas I muſt tend my Calling,* and they have Scripture for it too. *He that provides not for his family is worſe then an infidell*; as if God had ſet up any calling to hinder the calling of Chriſtianity: as if that were not the greateſt calling, and the beſt part that wil abide with us for ever; as if it were not the part of a Chriſtian to redeem time from his calling to the duties of Chriſtianity. I have no time (ſaith the worldling) what would you have me to doe? Why, what time had *David* when he meditated on the law of God day & night? he was a King, the King is bound to ſtudy the Script. & yet whoſe imployment is greater then that of the chief Magiſtrate?

1 Tim. 4. 8.

Luk. 10. 24.

Pſal. 1. 2.

Deut. 17. 18, 19.

And thus every one, as their ſtate and condition is, they have ſeverall pretences and excuſes. Thoſe that are young, their excuſe is, we have time enough for theſe things hereafter: Others, as thoſe that were negligent to build the ſecond temple, *The time is not yet ſay they*; when as the uncertainty of this life of ours, the weightineſs of the buſines, the danger of the cuſtome of ſin, the ingaging of our hearts deeper and deeper into the world, makes it a more difficult thing to be a Chriſtian. It more and more darkens our underſtanding, the

SER. VII. the more we ſinne, and the more it eſtrangeth our affections from good things, the more we have run out in an evill courſe. Time is a ſpeciall mercy, but when thou haſt not time onely, but the means, good company, & good motions, thou mayſt never have ſuch a gale againe, thy heart may be hardned through the deceitfulneſſe of ſinne. Again, who would want the comforts of Religion for the preſent? (as *Auſtin* ſaith) *I have wanted thy ſweetneſs too long*. What folly is it to want the ſweetneſſe and comfort of Religion ſo long as we may haue it?

Some others pretend, *The uncomfortableneſs of Religion, I ſhall want my comforts*; when as indeed there is no ſound comfort without having our hearts in a perfect communion with Chriſt, walking with God, and breaking off from our evill courſes. What is the reaſon of diſcomforts, unreſolvedneſſe, and unſetledneſſe, when we know not where we are, whither we goe, or what our condition is? unſetledneſs breeds diſcomfort, & indeed there is no pleaſure ſo much, as the pleaſure that the ſerving of God hath with it. As the fire hath light and heat always in it, ſo there is no holy action that we performe throughly, but as it hath an increaſe of ſtrength, ſo there is an increaſe of comfort and joy annexed to it. There is a preſent reward annexed to all things that are ſpiritually good; they carry with them preſent peace and joy, the conſcience hath that preſent comfort which conſumes all diſcouragements whatſoever, as is always found in the experience of that ſoule, that hath won ſo much of it ſelfe, as to break through diſcouragements to the practiſe of holy duties.

Beleevers

SER. VII.

rest, as to break through discouragements to the practise of holy duties. Beleevers have a joy and comfort, *that others know not of*, an hidden kind of *Manna*, and contentment. Rev. 2. 7.

These and a thousand such like discouragements men frame to themselves. My health wil not serve, I shall endanger my life. There is *a Lion in the way* (saith the sluggard) who with his excuses *thinks himself wiser then the wisest in the City.* There is none so wise as the sluggard; for belly policy teacheth him a great many of excuses, which he thinks will go for wisdom, because by them he thinks to sleep in a whole skin; He is but a sluggard for all that; and though he plead, *Yet a little while, Poverty*, not only outward, but spiritual poverty, and barrennesse of soul, *will come upon him as an armed man*, and leave him destitute of grace and comfort, when he shall see at the last what an evill course of life he hath led, that he hath yeelded so much to his lazie flesh to be drawn away by discouragements from duties that he was convinced were agreeable to the Word. *Now what may be the grounds and causes of these false pretences and Excuses, which hinder us from holy duties?* There be many causes. Prov. 26. 13. Prov. 26. 16.

*Causes of our delayes in putting off spiritual duties.*

First of all, one cause of this in us is this, Naturally so far as we are not guided by a better Spirit then our own, we are inclined too much to the earthly present things of this life; because they are present and pleasant; and we are nuzled up in them; and whatsoever puls us from them is unwelcome to us. This is one ground.

1. *Our inclination to earthly things.*

Again, joyn with this, that naturally since the fal,

SER. VII.

2. *Becauſe our depraved wit naturally aboundeth in ſhifts.*

*Eccl.7.2.9.*

the ſoul of man having loſt wiſdome to guide it to that which is truly good, hath wit enough left to deviſe untoward ſhifts, to excuſe that which is evill. In this fallen eſtate the former abilities to deviſe things throughly good, is turned to a matter of untoward wit joyned with ſhifting. God made man right, but he hath ſought out many inventions. *Carnall wit ſerves carnal will very well, and carnall luſts never want an advocate to plead for them, namely carnall reaſon.* From the bent therefore of the ſoule to ill things, *Pleaſure*, *Eaſe*, and *Honour*, (ſuch a condition as pleaſeth the outward man ſince the fall) the bent and weight of the ſoul goeth this way, together with wit: having loſt the Image of God in holy wiſdome, there is ſhifting. This is a ground alſo why delayes are joyned with ſhifts.

3. *Becauſe of Corrupt natures likeneſſe to the Devill.*

Againe, there is another ground, that *Corrupt Nature* (in this like the Devill and ſin) which never appear in their own colours, ſets a man on this way. Who would not hate the Devill, if he ſhould appear in his own likeneſſe? or ſin, if it ſhould appear in its own colours? and therefore wit ſtretcheth it ſelf to find our ſhifts. For ſayes the heart, unleſſe there be ſome ſhifts and pretences to cover my ſhame, I ſhall be known to be what I am indeed, which I would be loath were done: I would have the ſweet, but not the ſhame of ſin, the credit of Religion, but not put my ſelf to the coſt which cometh with true Religion, to deny my ſelf. *Corrupt courſes never appear in their own colours*, they are like the Devill for this.

And then again, Naturally there is a great deal of hypocriſie

SER. VII.

hypocriſie in us; we may do duties to ſatisfie conſcience, (for ſomewhat muſt be done) to hear now and then, read and come to prayer betwixt ſleeping and waking (yawning prayers) when we can do nothing elſe; ſomewhat muſt be done, conſcience elſe will cry out of us that we are Atheiſts, and ſhall be damned, ſome ſlubbering ſervice muſt be done therefore. Yet notwithſtanding herein is our hypocriſie, that we cannot bring our hearts to doe it, as it ſhould be done, to purpoſe; for though it be true that there is much imperfection in the beſt actions, the beſt performances; yet this is hypocriſie, when men doe not doe it, as God may accept it, and as it may yeeld themſelves comfort. The heart draws back, duties it will and muſt doe, but yet will not do them as it ſhall have comfort by them. This is inbred in the heart naturally, conſcience forceth to doe ſomething, though the fleſh and corruption puls back. This is the diſpoſition of all men, till they have got the victory of their own Atheiſtical hearts.

*Becauſe of our hypocriſie.*

And then again, Another ground may be this, a falſe conceit of God, and of Chriſt, that they will take any thing at our hands, becauſe we love our ſelves, and think that we do very wel; we think that God is ſuch a one as we are, as it is *Pſal.* 50. 21. *Thou thoughteſt that I was like unto thee, &c.* that God will be put off with any thing, and any excuſe will ſerve the turne. You have not a ſwearer, a filthy careleſſe perſon, *But he thinkes God is merciful, and Chriſt dyed for ſinners, & I was provoked to it, &c.* ſtill he thinks to have ſome excuſe for it, and that they wil ſtand good with God. This *Atheiſme*

5. *Becauſe of a falſe conceit of God and of Chriſt*

SER. VII.

is in us naturally; and when we are palpably to blame in the judgement of others, and our ſelves in our ſober wits, yet we put more ignorance and careleſneſſe on God then on our ſelves. *Tuſh, God regardeth it not*, it is the times, I would be better: It is company whom I muſt yeeld unto, &c. They think God will accept theſe things from them.

6. *The ſcandals we meet withall in the world.*

But one main ground thereof is, The ſcandals that we meet withall in the world, which (indeed) is a ground, becauſe our own falſe hearts are willing to catch at any thing. You ſee (ſay they) theſe men that make profeſſion of Religion what they are (and then the Devil will thruſt ſome Hypocriſie into the profeſſion of Religion) and they judge all by one or two (and will be ſure to do it) therein ſtands their ingenuity; and if they can ſee any infirmity in them that are incomparably better then themſelves, O they are ſafe, here is warrant enough to diſlike Religion and all good courſes, becauſe ſome do ſo and ſo, as if the courſe of Religion were the worſe for that. Thus they wrap themſelves in thoſe excuſes, as men do their hands to defend them from pricks. This is the vile poiſon of our hearts that will be naught, and yet notwithſtanding will have reaſon to be ſo, The ſpeech is, *wickedneſſe never wanted pretexts*: which as it is true of great wickedneſſe, much more is it of that which goes in the world for *drowſie, lukewarm profeſſion*, under which many ſink to hell before they are aware. They never want reaſons and pretexts to cover their ſin, there is a mint and forge of them in the ſoul, it can coine them ſuddenly. Thus we ſee

our

our wits doe ſerve us excellently well, to lay blocks in our own way to hinder us from Heaven; we are dunces and dull to doe any thing that is ſpiritually good, whereof we are incapable. But if it be to lay blocks in our own way to Heaven, to quarrel with God and his Ordinances, with the doctrine of ſalvation, with the inſtruments, teachers, and thoſe that lead us a better way, that our wit will ſerve for. But to take a courſe to doe us good another day, to lay up comforts, in which we might end and cloſe up our daies, there we are backward, and have ſhift upon ſhift. This is added for the further explication of it, becauſe of the neceſſity of the point: For, except our hearts be diſcovered to us, we ſhall never know what Religion meanes, ſave to know ſo much as may through the winding, turning, ſhifting, and falſhood of our own Nature, bring us to hell: Wherein we are worſe enemies to our ſelves then the Devill is, who could not hurt us, unleſſe we did betray our ſelves. But he hath factors in us to deale for him; our owne carnall wit and affection, they hold correſpondencie with him, whence all the miſchiefe that he doth us, is by that entercourſe that our nature hath with Satan: That is the *Dalilah* which betrayeth all the *Sampſons* (ſound worthy Chriſtians in the world) to their ſpirituall enemies. Therefore, we can never be ſufficiently inſtructed, what a vile nature we have ſo oppoſite to Religion, as farre as it is ſaving. Corrupt nature doth not oppoſe it ſo far as it is ſlubbered over, but ſo far as may bring us to that ſtate we ſhould be in, we have no worſe enemies then our owne

hearts. Therefore let us watch over our ſelves continually, and uſe all bleſſed meanes appointed of God, whereby we may eſcape out of this dangerous ſleepy diſpoſition of ſoule, which coſt the Church ſo deare, as we ſhall heare (God willing) hereafter.

# The Eight Sermon.

## Cant. V. III.

*I have put off my coat, how ſhall I put it on? I have waſhed my feet, how ſhall I defile them?*

WEE are now by Gods aſſiſtance to ſpeak of the remedies againſt the lazie diſtempers we are prone unto in ſpiritual things, where hwe left off the laſt day.

*Queſt.* What courſe ſhould we take then to come forth from this diſtempered laſineſſe, that we may attain a ſpiritual taſt and reliſh of heavenly things: ſo as not to loath religious exerciſes, or delay and put them off with excuſes?

*Anſw.* 1. *Reſolve not to conſult with fleſh and bloud* Iob. 2. First of all *Reſolve not to conſult with fleſh and in any thing*: For it alwayes counſels us for eaſe, as *Peter* counſelled Chriſt, *Maſter pity thy ſelfe*. So we have a nature in us like unto *Peter*, ſpare, favour, pity thy ſelfe. Like *Hevah*, and *Jobs* wife, we have a corrupt nature that is alwayes ſoliciting from God, and drawing us unto vanity. Take heed of counſelling with fleſh and bloud; for if men were in a City environed round about with enemies

enemies, would they conſult with them what they ſhould doe for defence of the City? were it not a mad part? and is it not a greater madneſſe when Chriſtians will conſult with fleſh and bloud what they ſhould do in duties of obedience, which will alwayes put us upon terms of eaſe, the favour of men, content and the like, which if a man yeeld to he ſhall never enter into heaven? Take heed therefore of conſulting with our enemy, ſeeing Satan hath all the correſpondency he hath by that enemy which we harbour in our boſome. In which caſe the hurt he doth us by his ſophiſtry comes by our ſelves, we betray our ſelves by our carnall reaſon, whereby Satan mingleth himſelfe with our imaginations and conceits. Let us therefore beware we liſten not to the counſell of fleſh and bloud, eſpecially when the matter comes to ſuffering once; for there of all other things fleſh and bloud doth draw back. Every one hath a *Peter* in himſelf, that ſaith, *Spare thy ſelfe*: Thou art indiſcreet to venture thy ſelfe upon this and that hazard. But where the judgement is convinced of the goodneſſe of the cauſe, whether it be *Religion* or *Juſtice*, for the firſt or for the ſecond table, that matters not: If the judgement be convinced of the things, then conſult not with fleſh and bloud whatſoever the ſuffering be. It is not neceſſary that we ſhould live in riches, honours, pleaſures and eſtimation with the world: but it is neceſſary we ſhould live honeſt men and good Chriſtians; therefore when fleſh and bloud objecteth in this kind, conſult not with it: Firſt, becauſe it is an enemy, and therefore is to be ſuſpected and neglected: Secondly,

SER. VIII.

1 Cor. 15. 50.

becauſe it is ſaid, *Fleſh and bloud ſhall not inherit the kingdome of Heaven*; and therefore we ſhould practiſe that firſt leſſon in Religion, *Heavenly wiſdome*; To ayde us wherein, Chriſt (knowing what an enemy we are to our ſelves in the waies of God) ſaith, *Let a man deny himſelfe, and take up his Croſſe and follow me.* There is no following of Chriſt, conſidering that our fleſh is ſo full of cavils and excuſes, unleſſe we practiſe that heavenly leſſon of Chriſt, *to deny our ſelves*, our whole ſelfe, our wit and reaſon in the matters of God: our will and affections. Say nay to all the ſluggiſhneſſe of the fleſh; ſilence all preſently as ſoone as ever they diſcourage thee from holy waies. Conſider whence they come; which is enough; from Gods and our enemy, and the worſt enemy we have that lyeth in our own boſome. And to inable us the better, marke what *Paul* ſaith,

Rom. 8.

*We are no more debtors to the fleſh, &c.* We owe nothing to it; I owe not ſuch obedience, ſuch objection to the fleſh and carnall reaſon; I have renounced it long ſince. What am I obnoxious to a man unto whom I owe no ſervice? We owe the fleſh no ſervice or obedience, what ſhall wee yeeld to that which wee have long ſince renounced?

3. *To be reſolved in ſpiritual undertakings.*

And withall, *In ſpirituall courſes, let us arme our ſelves with reſolution*: Firſt, conclude, *Is it ſo, or not ſo*, let our judgments be convinced; for *Reſolution* is a diſpoſition ariſing from the *will* immediately

ately,) but it is of the *will, by ſound judgement convinced of the goodneſſe of the thing*, after which the *will* reſolves. Get reſolution from ſoundneſſe of conviction, that ſuch things are good, and that they are beſt for us, and beſt for us at this time, the ſooner the better, that there is an abſolute neceſſity to have them, and that they are everlaſtingly good: O theſe conſiderations will put us on amaine to obtaine the ſame. It is our duty, and we ſhall ſin againſt *God*, againſt our *Conſcience*, againſt the *Spirit of God* and againſt others that take like liberty by our examples, if we yeeld to our baſe luſts and ſuggeſtions in this kind.

*A help to Reſolution.*

And to helpe *Reſolution* the more; let us have before our eyes the examples of Gods Worthies who (like unto *Davids* Worthies, who brake through the Hoaſt of the *Philiſtims* for water) have in all ages broken through all diſcouragements, and made conſcience more to pleaſe God, to hold Communion and fellowſhip with Chriſt, then to hold any correſpondency with the world. Looke to bleſſed *Paul*, *What do ye vexing of me and breaking my hearts? I am ready not onely to goe to Jeruſalem, but to die for Chriſts ſake.* And looke to Chriſt, how he ſhakes off *Peter*, *Get thee behind me Satan, &c.* Looke to *Moſes*, how he ſhooke off all the ſolicitations of a Court: *Becauſe he had an eye to the recompence of the reward.* Looke to *Ioſhuah*, *I and my houſe will ſerve*

2 Sam. 23. 26.

Act. 21. 13.

Mat. 16. 23.

Heb. 11. 26.

Ioſh. 24. 15.

SER. VIII.

*ſerve the Lord.* Let others of the world doe what they will: if others will goe to the Devill, let them; for my ſelf, I and my houſe (thoſe that I have charge of) will ſerve the Lord. This was a noble reſolution which was in good *Nehemiah, Shall ſuch a man as I flye?* what, ſhall I flye? ſhal I doe this? yeeld to this baſe diſcouragement? ſhal I diſcourage others (like thoſe *ſpies of Canaan*) by mine example? Hence it is that *Heb.* 11. in that notable Chapter, *That little book of Martyrs*, after the catalogue of thoſe worthies ſet down there, that which we are exhorted and pointed to in the beginning of the next Chapter, is unto the practiſe of the like vertues in imitation, having before us *ſuch a Cloud of witneſſes, wherewith being compaſſed*, the exhortation is, *Let us therefore ſhake off every thing that preſſeth down, & the ſin that hangeth ſo faſt on, &c.* As the *Cloud* was a guide to them to *Canaan* out of *Egypt*: ſo the *Cloud* of good examples is as it were a light to goe before us, to the *heavenly Canaan.* In this caſe above all, let us look to Chriſt, *who is the Author and finiſher of our faith.* This will make us break through diſcouragements, and reſolve indeed. What could hinder him? his love was ſo fiery, that nothing could hinder him to come from Heaven to the Womb of the Virgin from thence to the Croſſe, and ſo to the Grave, to be abaſed lower then ever any creature was. His love to us ſo carried him through all diſcouragements and diſgraces, *Conſider him who endured ſuch ſpeaking againſt of ſinners.* The conſideration of Chriſts love and example will carry us through all diſcouragements whatſoever.

Neh. 6. 11.

Heb. 12. 1.

Heb. 12. 2.

Heb. 12. 3.

And

SER VIII 3.

*To have good grounds and ſound reaſons for all we doe.*

And further, *Let us be able by ſound reaſons to juſtifie the wayes of God, and to anſwer cavils, to give account of what we doe to our ſelves and others*, with reaſons why we ſanctifie the *Sabbath*, have ſuch communion with God in Prayer, neglect the faſhions of the world, &c. To have reaſons ready from Scripture, is an exellent thing, when we are able to juſtifie whatſoever we doe by the *Word*, againſt all the quarrels of our own hearts and others. When we are led to do things only by the example of others, or by reſpects, then we are oft-times put to it on the ſudden by temptations, being not able to juſtifie what we doe. Let us labour therefore to doe things upon good grounds, and be able to juſtifie all the wayes of Religion, as they are eaſily juſtified; for nothing in this world ſtands with ſo much reaſon, as exactneſſe in the waies of God. There is ſo much reaſon for nothing in the world; as to be not onely Chriſtians but exact Chriſtians, as *Paul* ſaith to *Agrippa*, *Would to God you were not almoſt, but altogether as I am, ſaving theſe bonds.* To make conſcience of all wayes and courſes it ſtands with the moſt reaſon of the world, ſo to juſtifie Religion by reaſons unanſwerable, that may ſet down corrupt nature, and ſtop the mouth of the Devill himſelfe: And herein let us propound ſound & ſtrong queſtions to our ſelvvs often; Are thoſe things (that I am moved to doe) good? or are they not? If they be good, why doe I not doe them? If they be bad, why doe I doe them at all? If they be good, why doe I ſticke at them? how doe I prove them to be good? Have alway ready ſome Scripture, or reaſon from thence which is as good.

Act. 26. 29.

*To help on reaſon, we muſt often propound ſtrong queſtions to our ſelves.*

SER. VIII.

good. The reasons of the Word are most divinely strong, let them be ready against all objections whatsoever: as against slight oathes, think of that of Christ, *that we must give an account for all idle words*, Mar. 2. how much more for Atheisticall oathes? so against grosser sins learne reason; a civill man, a Heathen would not doe thus.

So also when the flesh moveth us to any backwardnesse in religious courses, let us have some Scriptures ready or reasons deducted from it. As 1. *From the Dignity of our profession.* *From the dignity of our profession, the great Hopes we have to be glorious another day.* And reason the matter, How doth this that I am moved to, suit with my hopes and expectation to come? how furthers it my journey homewards? And consider this likewise, 2. *Consider what excuses may be sufficient at the day of judgement.* *That no excuse will serve the turne at the day of judgement, but such an one as ariseth from an invincible infirmity, or an unremoveable impediment*; such an excuse taken from an invincible infirmity, may then serve the turn: As when we cannot possibly do a thing from impediments, that all the means in the world cannot remove: As a poor man cannot be liberall, &c. Excuses also *fetcht from impossible impediments*, as from invincible weakenesse, may avail, if a man have an infirme body, that he cannot do that which another man can: these excuses with a gratious God will serve the turn; which are not so much excuses, as a just plea; but otherwise our untoward excuses wil not serve the turn. What hindred them in the Gospel, who were invited to the Supper? Luk. 14. Excuses from *Oxen, Wives, &c.* Was it not lawfull to buy Oxen? and was it not lawfull for the married to take content in a Wife? *another had*

Ser. VIII.

*and married a Wife*; were not all these things lawful? very lawful: The *Farm* hurteth not, if it hinders not, nor the *Wife*, *Oxen*, nor any things; but in this case, when we regard these things more then the will of God to come to the feast of holy things, here is the malice of the Devill, which brings that dreadful message, *They shall never taste of my feast*. There is such an infinite disproportion between the good of Religion, Peace of Conscience, Joy in the Holy Ghost here, and Heaven and Happinesse hereafter; and between any thing in this world, that to alleadge any hinderance whereby we cannot keep a good conscience, and preserve assurance of salvation, is most extreme folly and Atheism. I believe not a better life (the disproportion being so great between the state of this life & a better) if I fetch excuses from the things of this life, to keep me from Religion, the Fear of God, and working out of my salvation with fear and trembling. These excuses will not serve the turn, not only with God, at the day of Judgment; but also our own consciences will tell us that we are Hypocrites to make such or such a plea; therefore when men become false, thereby to provide for wife or children, and take corrupt courses to keep them from Religion, with pretext of their callings (lest they should lose one day in seven) this imployment cannot prosper, which sleights over duties under false pretences. O! they can toil for the pelfe of the world, but for matters of their souls, they turn off all shamefully, as if there were not a *God* to judge them, a *Heaven* to reward them, or a *Hell* to punish them. Will such excuses serve

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SER. VIII.

the turne? O no, they cannot with conſcience, much leſſe with God the judge, who is greater then our conſcience. This is another way to cut off theſe cavils, to conſider that theſe excuſes cannot ſerve the turne, neither to comfort conſcience in this world, nor to uphold us in our plea at the day of judgement, Remember that.

4. *To inure our ſelves to bear the yoake of Religion.*

And then again, *Let us inure our ſelves to bear the yoake of Religion from our youth*, which will make it eaſie afterwards. It were an excellent thing, if thoſe who are young (in the prime of their yeares) would inure themſelves to the excerciſe of Religion, this would make it eaſie unto them, to read the word of God, to open their ſpirits unto him in Prayer. It may pleaſe God hereby (though they be negligent herein) yet they may be called to Religion. But for an old man there is much worke to doe to read, to get any thing into his braine, when his memory is peſtered with other things, and corrupt nature in him is armed with a world of excuſes, that might have been prevented by a timely and ſeaſonable training up in a courſe of Religion. Prophane young perſons know not what they doe when they put off Religion. Have they excuſes now? they will have many more hereafter, when Satan and corruption will be much ſtronger. O let them bear the yoake of Religion, that is, inure themſelves to duties that become Chriſtians, which may facilitate and make it eaſie and plyable, that it may not be hairſh to our nature. If a man do not heare, pray and read, he can never have Faith, Grace, Knowledge, Mortification of corruption (wherein Religion

*The danger of ignorant old age.*

*That the longer we put off Religion, the more will be our excuſes.*

gion ſtands) but becauſe theſe lead to duties that are hard to nature, and harſh, it is wiſdome to inure young ones thereto betimes, that having uſed themſelves to theſe preparing duties, they may be the more fitted for the eſſential ones: That having things in the braine by reading and hearing Grace may be wrought in the heart, it being a more eaſie paſſage from the braine to the heart. When a man is converted, it is an eaſie matter to bring it from the brain unto the heart, whereas a man that hath been negligent in his youth, muſt then be inſtructed in the principles of Religion. Therefore it is a miſerable caſe (though men be never ſo politick in the world) to have been negligent herein till age. It breeds a great deale of difficulty to them ere they can come to be in ſuch a ſtate as a Chriſtian ſhould be in. Remember this therefore, to doe as *Paul* adviſeth *Timothy*, a young man, *to exerciſe himſelfe in Godlineſſe*: It is a good thing for all that are young to exerciſe themſelves to all duties of Religion, or elſe pretences will grow up with age, whereby they will be indiſpoſed every day more then other. Experience ſhews it generally, we may beleeve it: if we will not we ſhall find it hereafter too true by woefull experience. 1 *Tim.*6.11.

9. *To inure our ſelves to difficulty and hardſhip.*

And then againe, by little and little, not onely to be inured to the yoke of Religion, but likewiſe *to endure difficulties, oppoſition and hardſhip*; as the Apoſtle ſtands upon it to *Timothy*, *To endure hardſhip and afflictions from the beginning*. If the thing be good and warrantable 2 *Tim.*2.3.

SER. VIII.

rantable, neglect the ſpeeches of the world. What are the ſpeeches of a company of men in the ſtate of nature, in their miſerable condition, to regard them ſo as not to indure hardſhip in ſuch things, of the goodneſſe whereof we are convinced? But in theſe dayes men take up a delicate profeſſion of Religion, men will be religious, but they will ſuffer nothing, not a taunt or a ſcoffe, they will part with nothing, be at no loſſe, ſuffer no croſſe, be at no pains with Religion further then may ſtand with all earthly content of this world. This delicate profeſſion (if any thing among us) threateneth the removing of the Goſpel and bleſſed truths we enjoy, becauſe we will not part with any pleaſure now. How will they ſuffer afflictions for the Goſpel (if ſuch times come) that will not part with a vain oath, a corrupt faſhion of life, a ſuperfluity, that will not part with a rotten unſavory diſcourſe, which diſcovereth a rotten ſpirit, and infecteth others? Here is a profeſſion of Religion indeed, that cannot have ſo much maſtery of the corrupt heart, as to deny and overcome it ſelf in things that are groſſely ill. How will a man part with his bloud and life, that will not part with things that he ſhould part withall, not only with ſomething to the poor, and to good uſes, but to part with ſome ſinfull courſe of life and wicked and ungodly luſts that fight againſt the ſoul, who will not endure not ſo much as a check, who rather then they will go under that cenſure wherewith the world is pleaſed to diſgrace Religion, they will live and die like Atheiſts? This extreme tenderneſſe in the matters

matters of God and ſalvation, is the cauſe why many eternally periſh.

Ser. VIII.

6. *To remember what we ſhould all be, and what we ſhould all aime at.*

Againe, to cut off all vaine excuſes, *Let us oft have in thought of our heart what we ſhould be, and what we ſhould all aime at, and how farre we come all ſhort of it.* A Chriſtian that hopes of good of his Religion ſhould live by faith, and depend upon God in the uſe of lawfull meanes. If he be as he ſhould be, he ought to walk with God, keep his watch with him, and do nothing unbeſeeming the eye of God. When his corruption draws him to be careleſſe, then he is not as he ſhould be; for in a right temper he ought to be fitted to every good work, ready for all opportunities of doing any thing that is good; becauſe the time of this life is the ſeeds-time, the time of doing good, the time of reaping is in the world to come; when therefore the heart is ſhut, whē any opportunity is offered of doing good, he may conclude certainly, I am cold & dul, pretend what I will, I am not as I ſhould be. *A chriſtian ought to abound in the work of the Lord*, especially having ſuch abundance of encouragements as we have: what a world of encouragements hath a Chriſtian? there are none to thoſe of Religion, from the inward content that it brings here at the houre of death, and in glory hereafter. When we are drawne to be ſcanty, niggardly, and baſe to things that are good, ſurely this is not as it ſhould be, pretend what we will to the contrary, this is a fault. A Chriſtian ſhould at all times be fit to yeeld and to render up his ſoul unto God, becauſe our life is uncertaine. When therefore we are moved by corruption to live in a ſtate

1 Cor. 15 58.

SER. VIII.

that we cannot abide to die in, becauſe we are under the guilt of ſome ſin; then certainely pretend what we will, our ſtate is ſo far naught, as far as there is unfitneſſe and unwillingneſſe to die. Let us have in the eye of our ſoule therefore, what a Chriſtian ſhould be, aime at it, and think that when we ſtop at a lower meaſure and pitch, that (pretend what we will) all is but from carnall wit and policy, the greateſt enemy that Religion hath.

We pray in the Lords Prayer, *Thy Kingdome come, thy will be done in earth as it is in Heaven*, great deſires, and which ſhould be the deſires of all our hearts. But herein we play the Hypocrites, whileſt we pray thus, that the *Kingdom of God may come*, that Chriſt may rule in our hearts over luſts and deſires; yet notwithſtanding we pretend this and that excuſe, whereby we may be led with this and that luſt, we croſſe our own prayers; yet it ſheweth what pitch we ſhould aſpire to, *To ſanctifie the Lord in our hearts*, to delight in him, and truſt in him above all. When we doe not this, we fall ſhort of our own prayers. And when we cannot bring our hearts to ſuffer, and to doe what God would have us to doe, but are led away with our own wils, we are not as we ſhould be; our wils ſhould be comformable to Chriſts in all things; it is our prayer, and therefore we ſhould aime at it. Now when fleſh and blood ſets up a pitch of Religion, I am well enough, and yet prayes, *Hallowed be thy Name, Thy Kingdome come, thy will be done, &c.* Such a man is an hypocrite; for his prayer leads him further and further ſtill till he come to Heaven, where is all perfection, untill when, our life

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is a life of endeavour and progreſſe. Though we be never ſo perfect, yet Chriſt may more rule and ſet up his Kingdome yet more in the heart, and further bring our will to his in all things: when fleſh and bloud ſets up cavils againſt this, we play the hypocrites with God, and croſſe our ſelves. Therefore let us juſtifie a meaſure of Religion beyond our preſent pitch whatſoever it is, juſtifie it more and more ſtill. Think we are never as we ſhould be till we be in Heaven, and never bleſſe our ſelves, but thinke that we ſhould alwayes be on the growing hand, and whatſoever excuſe comes to hinder us from zealouſneſſe and earneſtneſſe (though it carry a ſhew of reaſon in the profeſſion of Religion) account it to come from our corrupt hearts.

8. *To doe all our workes of Religion and our calling to God, and not to man.*

Againe, *Remember to doe all things to God, and not to man in our callings, both of Religion, and in our particular Callings*; and then whatſoever diſcouragement there is from men, we ſhould not be diſcouraged. We ſhall heare men continually complaine of others, that they are unthankfull perſons, and why ſhould we doe any thing for them? Why? doe it to God: If it fall within our callings, let us doe juſtice and ſhew mercy, God will accept, though men doe not: It cuts off many diſcouragements in duties. It is beſt to have Gods reward. In this world it is good to meet with naughty unthankfull perſons, becauſe elſe we ſhould meet with all our reward here. It is good to doe ſomewhat for Gods ſake, and for Religion, let people be as thankfull as they will; to ſay, I did it not to you, but to God. If a man

SER. VIII.

regard the discouragement of the world, he shall never doe that which is good, people in the world are so unthankful and regardless to those that wish them best, and that doe best to them. But if a man doe a thing to God, and doe it out of duty and conscience, he may hold on, have he never so many discouragements in the world, he shall lose nothing, all shall be rewarded, and is regarded.

8. *To be perswaded that sin is the greatest evill, and grace the greatest good in the world.*

Likewise be sure to carry this in mind, *That sinne is the greatest evill, and grace and goodnesse the best thing in the world.* Therefore there is no excuse for sinne, from any thing in the world; for it is the worst thing in the world, which staines the soule, and hinders it from comfort. And for grace and goodnesse in the inward man, it is the best thing in the world, therefore purchase this, though with disadvantage. It is best to avoid sin, though with enduring evill; yea to avoid the least sinne, by enduring the greatest evill. It is wisdome to do good with disadvantage, when the disadvantage is bounded onely in this life, the thing that I doe, being a thing which furthers my reckoning at the day of account. Therefore have this alway in consideration, Whatsoever I suffer in this world, I will not sin; this will cut off a world of excuses.

1 Pet. 4 1. Therefore let us labour to cut off al cavils, and to *arme our selves.* It is the Apostle *Peters* exhortation; as *Davids* worthies brake through the pikes to fetch him water from the Well *Bethlehem*; so all Christian worthies that look to be crowned, let them be armed inwardly with resolution for good things, take up resolutions that they will doe it.

2 Tim. 3 10. As *Paul* tels his Scholar *Timothy* of his purpose,

*Thou*

*Thou knowest my purpose, and manner of living:* This is the manner of a Christian life; that, this I *will not breake for all the world*: So there is a purpose of living honestly, a manner of life, not by starts, now and then to speak a good word, and to doe a good deed. But there is a purpose and manner of life for it, he resolves alwaies for the best things. Psalme 116.

And to this end beg of God his Spirit, which is above all impediments. The more Spirit, the more strength and courage against impediments. The more we attend upon holy meanes, the more spirituall and heavenly light and life is set up in the soule. The more spirituall we are, the more we shall tread under foot all those things that stand between us and Heaven. Let us therefore labour more and more for the Spirit, and then we shall offer an holy violence unto good things; as it was said of *Iohn Baptists* time, *The Kingdome of God suffered violence*, men were so eager of it, as that they suprized it as a Castle, by violence. *There is no way to take Heaven but by offering violence to discouragement, corruption, and whatsoever stands in the way, The violent onely takes Heaven by force.* Now when we are spirituall, we shall not pretend, *That there is a Lyon in the way*, that there are difficulties, as the sluggard doth, that thinkes himselfe wiser then many men who can render a reason; but we shall goe boldly and couragiously on; and know that there are more encouragements for good, and stronger, then the world hath allurements to be naught, which are but for the present life; but we have inward ones, which will hold out Matth. 11. 12.

SER. VIII

in the houre of death and after. Therefore goe on boldly and resolutely in good things, alwaies remembring to b g the Spirit of God, that may arme our spirits with invincible courage.

Now the Spirit of God brings *Faith* with it, which is a conquering victorious grace over the world, and *sees him* that is *invisible*; which brings *love* also, *which is strong as death*, wherewith the soule being warmed, *It constraineth us to doe duties* in spight of all impediments; the Spirit of God wil strengthen o r *hope* also of heaven, which strengthens us against all discouragements which stand in our way: *For this hope is on greater and better grounds then discouragements are*; and he that giveth us this hope, will inable us to possesse it.

Heb 11.27. Cant. 8.

Therefore labour first, *to have a cleare understanding of the things of God, and of the excellency of them*, for light will cause heat. Why did the Kingdome of Heaven in *Iohn Baptists time suffer violence?* why were men so violent to cleave unto Christ? because from *that time the Gospell was more clearely manifested.* And heavenly truths the more they are discovered and laid open (there is such an excellency in them) the more they worke upon the heart and affections. Therefore, *The Kingdome of Heaven suffered violence.* And where are people more earnest after good things, then in these places where the Evangelicall Truths of God are laid open most? there they breake through all discouragements whatsoever.

And so, *Labour for Faith to beleeve those truths*, which is the most victorious and conquering

quering Grace, that will carry us through all discouragements whatsoever, because it will set greater things before us, then the discouragements are. Are we afraid of men? *Faith* it sets *Hell* before us. Are we allured by the world? it sets *Heaven* before us. It conquers the world with all the discouraging temptations thereof. Are the discouragements from impossibilities? O, It is hard, I cannot doe it. I but (saith *Paul*) *I am able to doe all things through Christ that strengthens me.* There is a kind of omnipotency in faith; *O woman be it unto thee as thou wilt.* We have abundance of strength in Christ, *Faith* is but an empty hand that goes to Christ to draw from him what it hath need of; *In Christ I can doe all things.* SER. VIII. Phil. 4. 13. Matth. 15.

So, *To have our hearts warmed with love to him*; this Grace of the Spirit wil make us passe through al discouragements; for it hath a constraining power; *The love of Christ constraines us* (saith the Apostle) If our hearts once be warmed with the love of Christ, this will make us think nothing too dear for Christ, and will cut off all excuses and pretences whatsoever, which come from coldnesse of affection. *Love is strong as death*, as wee have it in this Booke, *Much water cannot quench it.* All oppositions and discouragements whatsoever, all the water which the Devill and the world hath or useth, cannot quench the heavenly fire of love, when it is kindled in any measure. *What carried the blessed Saints and Martyrs of God in all times through the pikes of all discouragements?* The Spirit of God, by 1 Cor. 5. 14. Cant. 8.

SER. VIII.

the Spirit of love, from a Spirit of Faith, and Heavenly conviction of the Excellency and truth of the things: they ſaw ſuch a light which wrought upon their affections, and carried them amaine againſt the ſtreame (contrary to the ſtreame of the times wherein they lived) that the worſe the times were, the better they were.

6. *The ſhortneſſe of enjoying theſe helps.*

And let us conſider againe, *That Chriſt will not be alwaies thus alluring us*, that we ſhall not alwaies have theſe encouragements, ſuch truths and motions of Gods Spirit, as perhaps we feel now. Therefore when we feele any good motion ſtirred up toward Chriſt, entertaine it preſently, happily we ſhall never heare of it againe, the longer we deferre and put it off, the worſe. As a man that is rowing in a boat, let him neglect his ſtroake, the neglecting of one may make him tug at it five or ſix times after to overtake thoſe that are before him. So nothing is gotten by ſloath and negligence, we doe but caſt our ſelves back the more.

10. *By ſetting the glory to come before us.* Heb. 11.

And let us help our ſelves with ſetting the Glory to come before our eies, with *Moſes* to have a *Patriarks* eye to him *that is inviſible*, to ſee a *Countrey afarre off*. Now, *we are nearer ſalvation then when we beleeved*; let us help our backward ſoules this way; that ſo, having ſtill Glory in our eyes, it may help us to goe through all diſcouragements whatſoever they be. We know *Zaccheus*, when he was afraid that he ſhould not ſee Chriſt, went before the multitude, and getting up upon the top of a Tree, thus helps himſelf: So doth Grace helpe it ſelf by Glory. And ſo farre is

Grace

Grace from objecting and pretending lets, as it makes ſupplyes in Gods ſervice; as *David*, who in this caſe was pleaſed to be accounted vile. Let us looke unto the Recompence of the reward, not to the preſent diſcouragements, but to the prize at the end of the race. What makes a ſouldier to fight hard for the victory in the end? The ſweetneſſe of the triumph. What makes a Husbandman goe through all diſcouragements? he hopes to receive a crop in the end. Conſider the iſſue which followeth after a conſcionable, carefull and Chriſtian life, after a more neare and perfect walking with God, maintaining Communion with him. Let there be what diſcouragements there will be in the world, *The end thereof is peace, the end of that man is peace*; Upon this ground the Apoſtle exhorts us, *to be fruitfull, and abundant in the worke of the Lord, knowing that your labour is not in vaine in the Lord.*

SER. IX.

Pſalme 37.
1 Cor. 15. 58

## The nineth Sermon.

CANT. V. VI.

*I roſe to open to my Beloved, but my beloved had withdrawne himſelfe. &c.*

NATURALLY we are prone to delayes in heavenly things, and then to cover all with excuſes. A man is a Sophiſter

Ser. IX.

ſter to himſelfe, whom he firſt deceives, before the Devill, or the world deceive him; Which is the reaſon why ſo oft in Scripture you have this mentioned. *Be not deceived, God is not mocked: Be not deceived, neither adulterer, nor covetous perſon, nor ſuch and ſuch, ſhall ever enter into the Kingdome of Heaven. Be not deceived.* Which is an intimation, that naturally we are very prone to be deceived in points of the greateſt conſequence in the world, to flatter our ſelves (as the Church doth here) with falſe excuſes, *I have put off my coat, &c.* But we ſhall now ſee in this next verſe, what becomes of all thoſe excuſes, and backwardneſſe of the Church whereby ſhee puts off Chriſt.

Gal. 6. 7.

1 Cor. 6. 9. 19.

Verſ. 4. *My beloved put in his hand by the hole of the doore, and my bowels were moved for him.*

Verſ. 5. *I roſe to open to my Beloved, and my hands dropped with myrrh, and my fingers with ſweet ſmelling myrrh upon the handles of the lock.*

Verſ. 6. *I roſe to open to my Beloved, but my Beloved had withdrawne himſelfe, &c.*

This comes of her ſluggiſhneſſe, and drowſineſs, that Chriſt abſented and withdrew himſelf. There are three things here ſet down in theſe verſes now read:

1. *Chriſts withdrawing of himſelfe.*
2. *His gracious dealing having withdrawne himſelfe.*

He doth not altogether leave his Church, but *puts his finger into the hole of the doore*, and then leaves ſome ſweetneſſe behind him before he goes. After which is ſet downe,

3. *The*

3. *The ſucceſſe of Chriſts departure, and withdrawing of himſelfe from her.* SER. IX.

1. *Her bowels were moved in her*, which were *hard* before.

2. *She roſe up out of her bed*, wherein formerly ſhe had framed and compoſed her ſelfe to reſt.

3. *She ſeeks and cals after him.*

But the Doctrinall points which are to be obſerved out of theſe verſes, are theſe:

1. *That Chriſt doth ſometimes uſe to leave his children*, as he did the Church here. *Obſerv.* 1.

2. *That the cauſe is from the Church it ſelfe*, as we ſee how unkindely ſhe had uſed Chriſt, to let him attend our leiſure ſo long; therefore he taking a holy ſtate upon him, leaves the Church. The cauſe of his forſaking us, is in our ſelves, we may thank our ſelves for it. *Obſerv.* 2.

3. That though Chriſt deal thus with us, yet notwithſtanding, *he never leaves us wholly, without ſome footſteps of his ſaving grace, and everlaſting love, ſome remainders and prints he leaves upon the ſoule*: So as it lingers after him, and never reſts till it find him, he alwayes leaves ſomething. There is never a totall deſertion; as we ſee here in Chriſts dealing, *he puts his finger into the hole of the doore*, he ſtands at the doore, and leaves *myrrh* behind him, ſomething in the heart that cauſeth a lingering, and reſtleſſe affection in her towards Chriſt. *Obſerv.* 3.

4. *That the Church by reaſon of this gratious dealing of Chriſt (leaving ſomewhat behind him) is ſenſible of her former unkindneſſe, is reſtleſſe and ſtirs up herſelf to endeavour more and more till ſhe have recovered her former communion, and ſweet fellowſhip* *Obſerv.* 4.

SER. IX.

*fellowſhip with Chriſt, which ſhe had before.* She never gives over till Chriſt and ſhe meet again in peace, (as we ſhall ſee in the proſecution.) Theſe be the chiefe points conſiderable.

*Obſerv. 1.*

Firſt, *Chriſt doth uſe ſometimes to leave his Church*, as here he doth, *My beloved had withdrawne himſelf, &c.*

But what kind of leaving is it?

We muſt diſtinguiſh of Chriſts leaving, and withdrawing of himeſlf: They are either in regard of outward or inward comforts and helps.

1. Outward, as Chriſt leaves his Church ſometimes, *by taking away the meanes of ſalvation*, the Miniſtery, *or by taking away outward comforts*, which is a withdrawing of his, eſpecially if he accompany the taking of them away with ſome ſignes of his diſpleaſure, or ſenſe of his anger, as uſually it falls out. This doth imbitter all croſſes & loſſes, namely when they come from Chriſt, as a Teſtimony of his anger for our former unkindneſs.

2. *Sometimes his forſaking is more inward*, and that is double; *Either in regard of peace and joy*, ſweet inward comfort that the ſoule had wont to feel in the holy Ordinances by the Spirit of *Chriſt*; *Or in regard of ſtrength and aſſiſtance.* There is deſertion in regard of *Comfort*, and in regard of *ſtrength.* Sometimes he leaves them to themſelves in regard of ſtrength and ſupportation, to fall into ſome ſin, to cure ſome greater ſin perhaps.

Now that Chriſt thus leaves his Church, it is true of all, both of the body and of each particular member of the Church.

1. *In the whole body.*

It is true of the *whole body* of the Church; for you

SER. IX.

you have the Church complaining *Iſai.49.14, God hath forgotten me. Can a Mother forget her child?* (ſaith God again) So *Pſal.44.9.* and in other places the Church complaines of *forſakings.* the Scripture is full of complaints in this kind.

It is true of *the ſeverall members*, and eſpecially of the moſt eminent members, as we ſee holy *Iob* complaines, as if God *had ſet him* (as it were) *a But to ſhoot at*, & had oppoſed himſelf againſt him. So *David* complaines (*Pſal.88.1. Pſalme 77.9.* and *Pſal.60.1.* and in other Pſalmes) of Gods anger. *Correct me not in thine anger.* The pſalmes are ful of this, ſo as it would be time unprofitably ſpent to be large in a point ſo cleare, that every one knoweth well enough, who reads and underſtands the Pſalmes. So *Ionah* likewiſe felt a kind of *forſaking*, when he was in the midſt of the ſea, when the *waves were without*, and *terrors within*, when he was in the midſt of hel (as it were:) thus you ſee the inſtances cleare the point.

Iob 7.2.

Ionah 2.4.5

The ends that God hath in it are many. Firſt, *To indeare his preſence the more to us*, which we ſlighted too much before. It is our corruption, the not valuing of things till they be gone, we ſet not the true price upon them when we enjoy them. When we enjoy good things, we looke at the grievances which are mingled with the good, and forget the good, which when it is gone then we remember the good. The Iſraelites could remember their onyons and garlick, and forget their ſlavery: So becauſe *Manna*, was preſent, they deſpiſed *Manna*, and that upon one inconvenience it had, *It was ordinary with them.*

1. *To indeare former ſlighted preſence.*

Numb 11.5.

Thus

SER. IX. Thus the corrupt heart of man is prone in the enjoying of favors: If it have any grievance, it murmures at that, and it troubles and makes them forget all the goodneſſe and ſweetneſſe of what they enjoy. But on the contrary, when God withdraws thoſe good things from us, then we forget thoſe former inconveniences, and begin to thinke what good we had by them. This is the poyſon and corruption of our Nature.

2. *To try the truth of our graces and affections.*

Againe, *Chriſt ſeems to forſake us, to try the truth of the graces and affections in us*, whether they be true or not, and to cauſe us to make after him, when he ſeemes to forſake us, as undoubtedly we ſhall, where there is truth of grace planted in the heart in any meaſure.

3. *To teach us wiſdome how to deale with others.* 2 Cor. 1. 4.

And *in regard of others, he doth it to teach us heavenly wiſdom how to deale with thoſe in affliction*: It makes us wiſe, tender, and ſucceſſefull in dealing with others, when we have felt the like particular grievance our ſelves; as *Gal. 6. 1. Brethren if a man be overtaken in a fault, you that are ſpirituall reſtore ſuch an one in the ſpirit of meekneſſe, conſidering thy ſelf, leſt thou alſo be tempted.* Experience of ſpirituall griefe in this kind, will make us fit, able and wiſe every way to deale with others.

4. *To weane us from the world.*

This ſerves likewiſe, *To weane us from the world, in the plenty and abundance of all earthly things*: For take a Chriſtian that hath no croſſe in the world, let him finde ſome eſtrangement of Chriſt from his ſpirit, that he finds not the comforts of the Holy-Ghoſt, and that enlargement which

which in former times he enjoyed, and all the wealth he hath, the earthly contentments he enjoyes, pleaſe him not, nor can content that ſoule, which hath ever felt ſweet communion with Chriſt. Againe, how ſhou'd we pray with earneſtneſſe of affection, *Thy kingdome come* (in the time of proſperity) except there were ſomewhat in this kind to raiſe up the ſoule to deſire to be gone? Now it is our ſubjection to theſe alterations and changes, ebbings and flowings, ſometimes to have the ſenſe of Gods love in Chriſt, and ſometimes to want it, ſometimes to feele his love, and ſometimes againe the fruits of his anger and diſpleaſure, which ſerves exceedingly to ſtir up mens deſires of heaven.

5. In this place here, the eſpeciall end was, *To correct the ſecurity, and ill carriage of the Church.*

5. *To correct our ſecurity.*

And likewiſe, *To prepare the Church by this deſertion, and ſeeming forſaking for nearer communion:* For indeed Chriſt did not forſake her, but to her feeling, to bring her in the ſequell to have nearer communion and union with himſelfe then ever ſhe had before; God forſakes, that he may not forſake; he ſeems ſtrange, that he may be more friendly: This is Chriſts uſage, *he perſonates an adverſary, when he intends to ſhew the greateſt effects of his love*, as we may ſee afterwards in the paſſages following.

9. *To prepare the ſoule for a neare communion with him.*

And alſo, *To make us to know throughly the bitterneſſe of ſin*, that we may grow to a further hatred of that which deprives us of ſo ſweet a communion: We think ſin a trifle, and never know it enough,

7. *That we may know throughly what the bitterneſſe of ſin is.*

SER. IX.

enough, till the time of temptation, that conſcience be awakened and opened, that it appeares in its right colours.

8. *That we may taſte a little what Chriſt ſuffered.*

And then again, *That we may know what Chriſt ſuffered, and underwent for us in the ſenſe of Gods wrath in the abſence of his favour for a time.* This the humane Nature could never have ſuffered, if his Divinity had withdrawn its ſelfe. Now all of us muſt ſip of that cup whereof Chriſt drank the dregs, having a taſt what it is to have God to forſake us. For the moſt part, thoſe beleevers who live any time (eſpecially thoſe of Great parts) God deales thus with, weaker Chriſtians he is more indulgent unto; at ſuch times we know of what uſe a Mediator is, and how miſerable our condition were without ſuch an one, both to have borne and overcome the wrath of God for us, which burden he could never have undergone it, but had ſunke under it, but for the *Hypoſtaticall union.*

*Uſe* 1. *Not to cenſure other Chriſtians wanting comfort.*

Let us not therefore cenſure any Chriſtian, when we find that their courſe hath been good and gratious; yet notwithſtanding they ſeem to want comfort, let us not wonder at them, as if God had utterly forſaken them: Indeed ſometimes they thinke themſelves forſaken, and the world thinkes them ſo too, *that God regards them not:* They are people of no reſpect either to God or to others, as you have the Church in the Pſalmes complaining, as if God had forſaken them, ſo they thinke themſelves forſaken, and the world thinks them ſo too, and neglects them; therefore in ſo doing we ſhall cenſure the

Pſalm 44.9.

gene-

generation of the Righteous. It was thus with the Head of the Church, with the whole Church, and with every particular member; neither is it fit we ſhould alwaies enjoy the ſenſe of Gods love. Chriſt by heavenly wiſedome diſpenſeth of his ſweetneſſe, comforts and peace, as may ſtand with our ſoules beſt good; and we ſhould as much take heed of cenſuring our ſelves in that condition, as if we were rejected and caſt away of God. We muſt judge our ſelves at ſuch times by Faith, and not by feeling; looking to the promiſes and Word of God, and not to our preſent ſenſe and apprehenſion.

*Uſe.2.* To prepare and looke for deſertion.

Againe if this be ſo, Learne to prepare and look for it before-hand, and to get ſome grounds of comfort, ſome promiſes out of the word, and to keep a good conſcience. O it is a heavy thing, when God ſhall ſeeme to be angry with us, and our conſcience at the ſame time ſhall accuſe us, when the Devill ſhall lay ſins hard to our charge, and ſome affliction at the ſame time lie heavy upon the ſore and guilty ſoule. If we have not ſomewhat layed up before-hand, what will become of the poore ſoule, when Heaven, and Earth, and Hell, and all ſhall ſeeme to be againſt it. There are few that come to Heaven, but they know what theſe things meane. It is good therefore to looke for them, and to prepare ſome comforts before hand.

But what here ſhould be the inward moving cauſe? It is in the Church her ſelfe; for marke the coherence, ſhe had turned off Chriſt with excuſes, pretences, and dilatory anſwers, and now

SER. IX.

presently upon it Christ forsakes her in regard of her feeling, and of the sweet comfort she formerly enjoyed. The point is,

Observ. 2.

*That the cause rests in our selves why Christ withdrawes comfort from our soules.*

Causes of desertion in our selves.

If we search our owne hearts we shall finde it so; and usually the causes in our selves are these, as it was in the Church here. 1 *When we are unkind to Christ*, and repell the sweet motions of the Spirit. 2 *When we improve not the precious means of salvation that we enjoy.* 3 *When we are careless of our conversation and company.* 4 *When we linger after carnall liberties and ease.* 5 *When we yeeld to carnall policy*, and shifts to keep us off from the power of Religion, to goe on in a luke warme course. 6 *When we linger after earthly things and comforts*, and wrap our selves up in fleshly policy for ease. 7 *When we tremble not at Gods judgements and threatnings, and at the signes of them*, with many such things Where these dispositions are, wee need not wonder if wee finde not the comforts of Christ, and of the Holy Ghost in us, with the gracious presence of his Spirit; the cause is in our selves. But security hath been at large spoken of before, where the Churches *sleep* was handled; therefore the point shall not be here inlarged, but onely some use made of it, as may serve for the present purpose.

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If Christ should take away the comforts that we enjoy, and remove himselfe, and his dwelling from us (for he is now yet among us, and knocks at our doores) doe we not give him just cause to depart? what a spirit of slumber possesseth

SER. IX.

seſſeth us, which will be awaked with nothing to ſeeke after Chriſt? how few lay hold upon God, preſſe upon him, wreſtle with him by prayer, to hide themſelves before the evill day come, as they ſhould doe? Therefore if Chriſt have abſented himſelfe a long time from the Church in generall, and withdrawne the comfort and preſence of his ordinances, and in particular withheld the ſweet comforts of our ſpirrits, and our peace, ſo that we ſee him in the contrary ſignes of his diſpleaſure and anger, as if he did not regard and reſpect us, we have given him juſt cauſe ſo to doe. Wee ſee here how the Church uſed Chriſt, and ſo doe we with the like ſecurity, and a ſpirit of ſlumber, with unkindeneſſe, notwithſtanding all the provocations that Chriſt uſeth to win us; he leaves us not, untill he be left firſt, for he deſires to have neerer acquaintance, communion and fellowſhip with the ſoul; as we have ſeene in the former verſe, *My love, my Dove, my Vndefiled. Open to me*, &c. Therfore if we doe not enjoy more acquaintance with Chriſt then we doe, and walk more in the comforts of the Holy Ghoſt, it is meerly from our own indiſpoſition and ſecurity; therefore let us cenſure our ſelves in this kinde, and not call Chriſt an enemy, as if he had forgotten, and God had forſaken. Take heed of ſuch a ſpirit of murmuring: If ſuch a ſtate befall us, let us labour to lay our hand upon our mouth, and to juſtifie Chriſt. It is juſt with thee thus to leave me, to give me over to this terrour, to deale thus with me, that have dealt ſo unkindely with thee; ſo to juſtifie God, and accuſe our ſelves, is

Act. 9 39.

*The beſt way to recover ſpirituall comfort.*

Ser. IX.

the beſt way to recover ſpirituall comfort.

Well, for the third point, *That howſoever Chriſt be provoked by the Churches ingratitude, drouſineſs, and careleſſe carriage, to leave her in regard of her feeling, and of inward comfort; yet notwithſtanding he is ſo gracious, as to leave ſomething behind him, that ſhews indeed, that he had not left the Church altogether, but onely in ſome regard.* For howſoever Chriſt (in regard of ſome order of his *providence*) leave it, yet in regard of another order of his *providence*, care and mercy, he doth not leave it, ſo as one way which he takes muſt ſometimes give place to another way of his working in ordering things. Sometimes he is preſent in a way of comfort, that is one order of his diſpenſation, and when he ſees that that is neglected, then he withdraws his comforts, and hides his gracious countenance, yet he is then preſent ſtill in another order and way, though we diſcerne it not, that is, in a way of humbling the ſoule, letting it ſee its ſin: So here, howſoever Chriſt had withdrawn himſelfe in regard of this manner of his dealing, in reſpect of comfort, that the Church did not now ſee his grace, favour, yet he left behind him a Spirit of grace, to affect her heart with grief, ſorrow, and ſhame, and to ſtir up her endevors to ſeek after him (as it is ſaid here) *I roſe to open to my beloved, and my hands dropt myrrh, and my fingers ſweet ſmelling myrrh, upon the handles of the locks.*

Here obſerve theſe three things, which ſhall be briefly named, becauſe they ſhall be touched elſewhere.

*Obſerv.* *Chriſts grace is the cauſe of our grace.*

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He first leaves *myrrh*, and then her fingers drop *myrrh*; our oyle is from his oyle; the *head being anointed, the oyle ran downe to the skirts of Aarons garment*; *Out of his fulneſſe we receive grace for grace*; that is, our grace is anſwerable to the grace of Chriſt, we have all from him, *favour* for his *favour*, becauſe he is *beloved*, we are *beloved*; we have the grace of *Sanctification* from him, he was ſanctified with the Spirit, therefore we are ſanctified; we have *Grace of priviledge* for his Grace, he is the Sonne of God, therefore *we are Sonnes*; He is the heire of Heaven, therefore *we are heires*; ſo that of his grace it is we receive all, whether we take grace for *favour*, or for the *grace of Sanctification*, or the *grace of priviledge and prerogative*, all our graces are from his, *our myrrh from his myrrh*. SER. IX. Pſal. 133. 2. & 36. 9. Joh. 1. 16.

This ſhould teach us, the neceſſity of dependance upon Chriſt, for whatſoever we have or would have; which dependance upon Chriſt is the life of our our life, the ſoule of our ſoules.

Againe obſerve from hence, that the Churches fingers dropped *myrrh* when ſhe opened the doore, and ſtirred up her ſelfe to endeavour. When firſt her bowels were moved, then ſhe makes to the doore, and then her hands dropped myrrh, ſo that

*We finde experience of the grace of Chriſt, eſpecially when we ſtir up our ſelves to endeavour. Ariſe and be doing, and the Lord ſhall be with thee* (ſaith *David* to *Solomon*:) ſo let us rouze up our ſelves to endeavour, and we ſhall finde a gracious preſence of Chriſt, and a bleſſed aſſiſtance of the Spirit of Obſerv. 1 Chr. 28. 20.

Ser. IX.

Christ, who will shew himself in the midst of endeavours, *To him that hath shall be given*: what is that? To him that hath (if he exercise and stir up the grace of God in him) shall be given. Therefore let us stirre up the graces of God in us, let us fall upon actions of obedience, second them with prayer; whatsoever we pray for and desire, set upon the practise thereof; we mocke God else, except we endeavour for that we desire. There was myrrh left on the doore, but she feeles it not till she arose, opened the doore, and laid her hand upon the lock.

Mat. 25. 29.

I speake to any Christians experience, if in the midst of obedience they do not finde that comfort they looked for, and that it is meat and drink to doe Gods will; therefore keep not off and say, I am dead and drowsie, therefore I shall be still so: You are deceived, fall upon obedience and practising of holy duties, and in the midst thereof thou shalt finde the presence and assistance of Gods Spirit, that will comfort thee.

*Observ.* 3.

The third thing observable from hence is this, *That Gods Graces are sweet.*

Pleasant and sweet, compared here to myrrh, which was an ingredient in the *holy oyle*. Grace makes us sweet; prayers are sweet, as it is *Rev.* 8. 4. Christ mingleth them with his owne sweet odours, and so takes and offers them to God.

Holy Obedience is sweet and delightfull to God and to the conscience, it brings peace and delight to others, therefore they are called *fruits*; fruit doth not onely imply and shew the issuing of good things from the root, but there is also a

pleasantnesse

pleaſantneſſe in it: ſo there is a delightfulneſs in good works, as there is in fruit to the taſte; therefore if we would be ſweet and delightfull to God, let us labour to have grace. If wee would think of our ſelves with contentment, and have inward ſweetneſſe, let us labour for the graces of Gods Spirit, theſe are like *myrrh. The wicked are an abomination unto the Lord*, who abhorres them, and whatſoever is in them: But, *the righteous and ſincere man is his delight.* Therefore if we would approve our ſelves to God, and feele that he hath delight in us, labour to be ſuch as he may delight in. SER. IX. Prov. 15. 8.

Wherefore let the diſcouraged ſoule make this uſe of it; not to be afraid to doe that which is good upon feare we ſhould ſinne. Indeed ſinne will cleave to that we doe, but Chriſt will pardon the ſinne, and accept that which is ſweet of his owne Spirit. Let us not eſteeme baſely of that which Chriſt eſteems highly of; nor let that be vile in our eyes that is precious in his; let us labour to bring our hearts to comfortable obedience, for it is a ſweet ſacrifice to God. *Uſe.*

Now whence came all this? from this that is mentioned, *ver.* 4. *My Beloved put in his hand by the hole of the doore, and my bowels were moved for him.* Firſt for that expreſſion, *he put his finger in by the hole of the doore.* It implies here, that Chriſt before he departed left by his Spirit an impreſſion on the Churches heart, which deeply affected her to ſeek after him.

The *Fingers* ſpoken of, are nothing but *the power of his Spirit*, as the uſuall Scripture phraſe

Serm. IX.

Exod. 8.19. is, *This is Gods finger, Gods mighty hand*, without which all ordinances are ineffectuall. *Paul may plant, and Apollos may water*, but all is nothing without the working of the Spirit: The motions whereof are most strong, being *Gods finger*, whereby he wrought all that affection in the Church, which is here expressed. Christ before he leaveth the Church, *puts his finger into the hole of the doore*;

1 Cor. 3.7. that is, he workes somewhat in the soule by his Spirit, which stirred up a constant endeavour to seeke after him. For why else followes it: *her bowels were moved after him*, which implies a work of the Spirit upon her bowels, expresst in her griefe for his absence, and shame for her refusing his entrance, and whereby her heart was moved, and turned in her to seeke after him. From whence thus explained, observe,

*Observ.* 1. *That outward meanes will doe no good, unlesse the finger of Christ come to doe all that is good.*

The finger of Christ is the Spirit of Christ, that is, a kinde of Divine power goes from him in hearing and speaking the word of God, and in prayer, there is more then a mans power in all these; if these work any effect, *Christ must put his finger in*; when duties are unfolded to us in the Ministery of the word, all is to no purpose, but the sounding of a voice, unlesse the finger of Christ open the heart, and worke in the soule.

*Use* 1. Let us make this use of it therefore, not to rest in any meanes whatsoever, but desire the presence of Christs finger to move, and to work upon our hearts and soules. Many careless Christians goe about the ordinances of God, and never

ver regard this power of Chriſt, this mighty power, *the finger of Chriſt*. Thereupon they finde nothing at all that is divine and ſpirituall wrought in them: For as it required a God to redeeme us, to take our nature, wherein he might reſtore us: ſo likewiſe it requires the power of God to alter our natures. We could not be brought into the ſtate of grace without Divine ſatisfaction; and we cannot be altered to a frame of Grace without a Divine finger, the finger of God working upon our hearts and ſoules. This ſhould move us in all the ordinances of God that we attend upon, to lift up our hearts in the midſt of them. Lord, let me feel the finger of thy Spirit writing thy word upon my heart. *Turn us O Lord, and we ſhall be turned.* Pray for this quickning and inlivening, for this ſtrengthening Spirit, all comes by it. 2. From this that is ſaid here, *That Chriſt puts his finger into the hole of the doore before he removed it*, and withdrew himſelfe, Obſerve, SER. IX.

How graciouſly Chriſt doth deale with us, *That he doth always leave ſome grace before he doth offer to depart.* Let us therefore for the time to come, lay, and ſtore this up as a ground of comfort, that however Chriſt may leave us, yet notwithſtanding he will never leave us wholly, but as he gave us his holy Spirit at firſt, ſo he will continue him in us by ſome gracious work or other, either by way of *comfort*, or of *ſtrength* to uphold us. Perhaps we may need more ſorrow, more humility, then of any other grace: For Winter is as good for the growing of things as the Spring; becauſe were it not for this, where would be the killing *Obſerv.* 2.

SER. IX.

killing of weeds and wormes, and preparing of the ground, and land for the Spring? So it is as needfull for Christians to finde the presence of Christ in the way of *humiliation* and *abasement*, causing us to afflict our own soules, as to feele his presence in *Peace*, *Ioy*, and *Comfort*. In this life we cannot be without this gracious dispensation. We may therefore comfort our selves, that howsoever Christ leaves us, yet he will alwaies leave somewhat behind him, as here he left some *myrrh* after him upon the handle of the doore; some *myrrh* is left alwaies behind him upon the soule, which keeps it in a state and frame of grace, and sweetens it. *Myrrh* was one of the ingredients in the *holy oyle*, as it is *Exod.* 30.30. and so this leaving of *myrrh* behind him, signifies the oyle of grace left upon the soule, that inabled the Church to doe all these things, which are after spoken of.

*Object.* But you will say, How doth this appear, when in some desertion a Christian findes no grace, strength, or comfort at all; that nothing is left?

*Answ.* It is answered, *they alwaies doe.* Take those who at any time have had experience of the love of God, and of Christ formerly, take them at the worst, you shall finde from them some sparkles of grace, broken speeches of tryed secret comfort, some inward strength and strugling against corruptions, their spirits endeavoring to recover themselves from sinking too low, and with something withstanding both despaire and corruption. Take a Christian at the worst, there will be a discovery of the Spirit of Christ left in him, notwithstanding

Ser. IX.

withſtanding all deſertion. This is univerſally in all in ſome meaſure, though perhaps it is not diſcerned by a Chriſtian himſelfe, but by thoſe that are able to judge. Sometimes others can read our evidences better then our ſelves. A Chriſtian that is in temptation cannot judge of his owne eſtate, but others can, and ſo at the very worſt, he hath alwaies ſomewhat left in him, whereby he may be comforted; Chriſt never leaves his Church and Children that are his wholly. Thoſe that are wholly left, they never had ſaving grace, as *Achitophel*, *Cain*, *Saul*, and *Judas* were left to themſelves, but for the Children of God, if ever they found the power of ſanctifying grace, *Chriſt whom he loves, he loves to the end*; from whom he departs not, unleſſe he leaves ſomewhat behind him, that ſets an edge upon the deſires to ſeeke after him. John 13. 1.

Make this ſecond uſe of it; to magnifie the gracious love and mercy of Chriſt; that when we deſerve the contrary, to be left altogether, yet notwithſtanding ſo graciouſly he deales with us. *Uſe* 2.

Behold in this his dealing the mercy of Chriſt, he will not ſuffer the Church to be in a ſtate of ſecurity, but will rather (to cure her) bring her to another oppoſite ſtate of griefe and ſorrow, as we ſhall ſee in the next point, how that which Chriſt left in the heart of the Church, ſo afflicted her, *That her bowels were turned in her.* Whereupon ſhe riſeth, ſeeks, and enquires after Chriſt by the watchmen and others. So ſhe ſaith of her ſelfe,

*My bowels were moved in me*, &c.

What was that? My heart was affected, full of

Ser. IX. of ſorrow and griefe for my unkind dealing with Chriſt. Hereby thoſe affections were ſtirred up (that were afore ſleepy and ſecure) to godly grief, ſorrow, and ſhame: For God hath planted affections in us, and joyned them with conſcience, as the Executioners with the Judge: So that when as conſcience accuſeth of any ſin, either of *Omiſſion* or *Commiſſion*, affections are ready to be the executioners within us. Thus to prevent eternall damnation, God hath ſet up a Throne in our owne hearts to take revenge and correction, by our own affections, godly ſorrow & mourning; as here the Church ſaith, *My bowels were turned in me.* It was a ſhame & grief, ſpringing out of love to Chriſt that hath been ſo kind, patient, and full of forbearance to her. *My bowels were turned in me*, that is, ſorrow and griefe were upon me for my unkind dealing.

The obſervation from hence is:

Obſerv. *That ſecurity, and a cold dull ſtate produceth a contrary temper*; that is, thoſe that are cold, dull, ſecure, and put off Chriſt, he ſuffers them to fall into ſharp ſorrows and griefs.

We uſually ſay, cold diſeaſes muſt have hot and ſharp remedies: It is moſt true ſpiritually; ſecurity, which is a kind of lethargy (a cold diſeaſe) forgetting of God, and our duty to him, muſt have a hot and ſharp cure; and the lethargy is beſt cured by a burning ague. So Chriſt deals here, he puts his finger in at the hole of the doore, and leaves grace behind to work upon the bowels of the Church, to make her grieve and be aſhamed for her unkind dealing. Thus he cures ſecurity by ſorrow. This is the beſt concluſion of ſinne.

And

SER. IX.

And we may obſerve withall, that even *ſins of Omiſſion* they bring *griefe, ſhame,* and *ſorrow*; And in the iſſue through Chriſts ſanctifiing them, theſe which they breed, conſume the *Parent*; that is, *ſinne* brings forth *ſorrow, ſhame,* and *griefe*, which are a meanes to ſecure *ſinne. Security* breeds *the moving of the bowels*; which *moving* helps *ſecurity*. Would we therefore prevent ſorrow, ſhame, and griefe? Take heed then of *ſecurity* the cauſe that leads to them; yea of ſins of *Omiſſion*, wherein there is more danger then in ſinnes of *Commiſſion*. The ſinnes of carnall wicked men are uſually ſinnes of *Commiſſion*, moſt which breake out outragiouſly, and thereby taint themſelves with open ſins. But the ſins of Gods people, (who are nearer to him) are for the moſt part ſins of *Omiſſion*, that is, negligence, coldneſſe, careleſneſſe in duty, want of zeale, and of care they ſhould have in ſtirring up the graces of God in them, as the Church here, which did not give way to Chriſt, nor ſhooke off ſecurity. *Obſerv.* 2.

Let us eſteem as ſleightly as we will of ſinnes of *Omiſſion*, and careleſneſſe, they are enough to bring men to hell, if God be not the more mercifull. It is not required onely that we doe no harme, and keep our ſelves from outward evils; but we muſt doe good in a good manner, and have a care to be fruitfull and watchfull; which if we doe not, this temper will bring griefe, ſhame, and ſorrow afterwards: As here even for ſinnes of Omiſſion, deadneſſe, and dulneſſe, we ſee the Church is left by Chriſt, *and her bowels are turned in her*: For careleſſe neglect, and omiſſion of duty *Uſe.*

SER. IX. ty to God, is a preſage, and forerunner of ſome downefall and dejection. And commonly it is true, when a man is in a ſecure and careleſſe eſtate, a man may read his deſtiny (though he have been never ſo good) nay the rather, if he be good. Such a one is in danger to fall into ſome ſharp puniſhment, or into ſome ſin; for of all ſtates and tempers, God will not ſuffer a Chriſtian to be in a ſecure, lazie, dead ſtate, when he cannot performe things comfortably to God, or himſelf, or to others; a dead ſecure eſtate is ſo hatefull to him (decay in our firſt love, this lukewarme temper) that he will not endure it, it either goes before ſome great ſinne, croſſe, affliction, or judgement.

*My bowels were moved in me.*

And good reaſon, it was a ſutable correction to the ſinne wherein ſhe offended: For Chriſt his bowels were turned towards her in love and pity, *My love, my dove, my undefiled*; in which caſe ſhe neglecting him, it was fit ſhe ſhould finde *moving of bowels* in another ſenſe (out of *love* too) but in ſhame and mourning. Chriſt here leaves her to ſeeke after him, that had waited and attended her leaſure before, as we ſhall ſee after.

The next thing we may hence obſerve in that, *That her bowels were turned in her* from ſomething left in the hole of the doore by the Spirit of Chriſt, is,

*Obſer.* *That Chriſt hath our affections in his government.*

He hath our bowels in his rule and government, more then we our ſelves have. We cannot of

SER. IX.

of our ſelves rule our griefe, ſhame, ſorrow or ſuch affections as theſe. The wiſeſt man in the world cannot award griefe, and ſorrow, when God will turne it upon his bowels, and make a man aſhamed and confounded in himſelfe. All the wit and policy in the world cannot ſuppreſſe thoſe affections; for Chriſt rules our hearts. *The hearts of Kings are in his hand, as the rivers of water,* as well as the hearts of ordinary perſons. Prov. 21. 1.

If he ſet any thing upon the ſoule to afflict it and caſt it downe, it ſhall afflict it, if it be but a conceit, if he will take away the reines from the ſoule, and leave it to its own paſſion, removing away its guard; for he by his Spirit guards our ſoules with peace, by commanding of tranquillity: So as let him but leave it to its ſelfe, and it will teare it ſelfe in ſunder; as *Achitophel*, who being left to himſelfe, did teare himſelfe in pieces; *Cain* alſo being thus left, was diſquieted, tormented, and wracked himſelfe. So *Juda*, in this caſe being divided in himſelfe, you ſee what became of him. Let Chriſt but leave us to our own paſſion of ſorrow, what will become of us but miſery? He hath more rule therefore of our paſſions then we our ſelves have, becauſe we cannot rule them graciouſly, nor can we ſtay them when we would. 2 Sam 17. 23. Gen 3. Mar. 27 31.

Therefore this ſhould ſtrike an awe in us of God, with a care to pleaſe him: For there is not the wiſeſt man in the world, but if he remove his guard from his ſoule, and leave him to himſelfe: if there were no Devill in hell, yet he would make him his owne tormenter and executioner; therefore *Ve.*

SER. IX. therefore the Apoſtle makes this ſweet promiſe, *Phil.*4.7. He bids them pray to God; *And the peace of God which paſſeth all underſtanding ſhould* [*gard*] *their ſoules*, &c. So the word is in the originall. It is a great matter for the keeping of Gods people, to have their ſoules guarded.

*Her bowels were turned in her.*

Here againe, as the concluſion of all this, we ſeeing this eſtate of the Church, may wonder at Chriſts carriage towards her in this world. Chriſt
1 Theſſ.3. is wonderfull in his Saints, and in his *goodneſſe* towards them; ſometimes alluring them, as we ſee Chriſt the Church here; wondrous in *patience*, notwithſtanding their provocation of him; wondrous in his *deſertions*; wondrous *in leaving ſomething behind him in deſertions*. Thoſe that are his, he will not leave them without grace, whereby they ſhall ſeeke him againe. Nay, the falling out of lovers ſhall be the renewing of freſh and new love, more conſtant then ever the former was. Thus our bleſſed Saviour goes beyond us in our deſerts, taking advantage (even) of
Rom.8.28. our ſecurity (for our greater good) making all worke to good in the iſſue, which ſhall end in a more neare and cloſe communion between Chriſt and his Church, then ever before. Carnall men feele not theſe changes, ebbings and flowings; they are not acquainted with Gods forſakings. Indeed their whole life is nothing but a forſaking of God, and Gods forſaking of them, who gives them outward comforts, peace and friends in the world, wherein they ſolace themſelves; but for inward communion

communion with him, any ſtrength to holy duties, or againſt ſinne, for to be inſtruments for Gods honour and ſervice to doe any good, they are careleſſe: For they live here to ſerve their owne turnes, leaving their ſtate and inheritance behinde them. The Scripture ſaith, *They have no changes, therefore they feare not God*, and ſo they goe down to Hell quietly and ſecurely. O but it is otherwiſe with Gods children, they are toſſ d up and downe, God will not ſuffer them to proſper, or live long in a ſecure, drowſie, ſinfull ſtate the continuance wherein is a fearfull evidence, that ſuch an one as yet hath no ſaving grace, nor that he yet belongs to God, ſeeing Chriſt hates ſuch an eſtate, and will not ſuffer his to be long therein, but will ſhift and remove them from veſſell to veſſell, from condition to condition till he have wrought in them that diſpoſition of ſoule, that they ſhall regard, and love him more and more, and have nearer and nearer communion with him.

Pſal. 38. 19.

# The tenth Sermon.

## CANT. V. VI.

*I opened to my Beloved, but my Beloved had withdrawne himselfe, and was gone; my soule failed when he spake, I sought him, but I could not finde him, I called him, but he gave me no answer.*

THus we see that the life of a Christian is trouble upon trouble, as wave upon wave. God wil not suffer us to rest in security, but one way or other he will fire us out of our starting holes, and make us to run after him; how much better were it for us then to doe our works cheerfully and joyfully, *so to run as we may obtaine*, than to be thus hurried up and down, and through our own default coming into desertions, and there receiving rebukes and blowes, and delayes ere we have peace againe, as it fell out with the Church in the sequel, for this Text is but the beginning of her seeming misery. The *watchmen* after this, *found her, and wounded her*, &c. But Heaven is more worth then all, now that her affections are set on fire, from thence she bestirs her selfe, is resolute to finde out her *beloved*, whom she highly values above all this world.

How

SER. X.

How her affections were ſtirred by Chriſts putting in his finger at the hole of the doore, we have heard. Now followes her action thereupon, for here is riſing, opening, ſeeking, calling and enquiring after Chriſt.

*Action followes affection.* After her bowels are moved, ſhe ariſeth and openeth, from whence we may further obſerve,

Obſerv. *That where truth of affection is, it will diſcover it ſelf in the outward man, one way or other.* If there be any affection of love & piety to God, there will be eys lift up, knees bended down, & hands ſtretched forth to Heaven. If there be any grief for ſin, there will be the face dejected, the eyes looking down, ſome expreſſion or other: If there be a deſire, there will be a making forth to the thing deſired: for the outward man is commanded by the inward, which hath a kinde of ſoveraign commanding power over it, and ſayes, Do this and it doth it, ſpeake this and it ſpeakes it; therefore thoſe whoſe courſes of life are not gracious, their affections and their hearts are not good; for where the affections are good, the actions will be ſutable. *Her bowels were moved in her,* & preſently ſhe ſhews the truth of her affection, in that ſhe maketh after him.

1. *Her ſoul failed when he ſpake.*
2. *She makes after him.*

*My ſoule failed when he ſpake, I ſought him, but I could not finde him.*

Of Chriſts withdrawing himſelf we ſpake in generall before, wherefore we will leave that and proceed.

*My ſoul failed when he ſpake.*

SER. IX. That is, her ſoule failed when ſhe remembred what ſhe had ſpoke, when he ſtood at the doore, and ſaid, *Open to me my Siſter, my Love, my Dove, my Undefiled, for my head is wet with the dew*, &c. Now when Gods Spirit had wrought upon her, then ſhe remembred what Chriſt had ſaid: All thoſe ſweet allurements were effectuall now unto her, eſpecially when ſhe ſaw that after thoſe ſweet allurements Chriſt had withdrawne himſelfe, for that is the meaning of theſe words (*My ſoule failed when he ſpake unto me*) He did not ſpeak now, but her ſoule failed after he ſpake; for ſo it ſhould be read, that is, after ſhe remembred his ſpeech to her, for now when ſhe opened he was not there, therefore he could not ſpeak to her.

*Obſerv.* *The word of Chriſt howſoever for the preſent it be not effectuall, yet afterwards it will be in the remembrance of it.*

To thoſe that are gracious, it will be effectuall when the Holy-Ghoſt comes to ſeale it further upon their heart, Chriſt ſpake many things to his Diſciples which they forgot; but when afterwards the *Holy Ghoſt* the *Comforter* was come, his office was, *to bring all things to their remembrance that they had forgotten before.* The Holy Ghoſt taught them not new things, but brought former things to their remembrance; for God will make the word effectuall at one time or other, perhaps the word we heare is not effectuall for the preſent, it may afterwards, many yeares after, when God awakes our conſciences.

Joh. 14. 26.

And as this is true of Gods Children, the ſeed now ſowne in them perhaps will not grow up

SER. X.

up till many yeares after: ſo it is true alſo of thoſe that are not Gods Children, they think they ſhall never heare again of thoſe things they heare, perhaps they will take order by ſenſuality, hardening of their hearts (and through Gods judgements withall concurring) that conſcience ſhall not awake in this world, but it ſhall awake one day; for it is put into the heart to take Gods part, and to witneſſe againſt us for our ſins. It ſhall have and performe its office hereafter, uſe it as you will now, and it will preach over thoſe things again that you now heare. You ſhall heare againe of them, but it ſhall be a barren hearing. Now we may heare fruitfully to doe us good, but afterwards we ſhall call to minde what we have heard, and it ſhall cut us to the heart. *Dives* (we know) had *Moſes* and the *Prophets* to inſtruct him, but he never heeded them in his life, untill afterwards to his torment: So men never heed what they heare and read, they put off all and lay their conſciences aſleep; but God will bring them afterwards to remembrance. But becauſe it is a point eſpecially of comfort to the Church,

Luk. 16. 25.

*Uſe.*

*To attend diligently upon the ordinances of God.*

Labour we all of us to make this uſe of it, to be diligent and carefull to heare and attend upon the ordinances of God; for howſoever that we heare is not effectuall for the preſent, but ſeemes as dead ſeed caſt into the heart, yet God will give it *a body after*, as the Apoſtle ſpeakes, at one time or other. And that which we heare now, the Holy Ghoſt will bring it to our remembrance when we ſtand in moſt need of it.

1 Cor. 15. 38.

SER. X.

She was in a ſpirituall ſwoone and *deliquium* upon his withdrawing, whence the point conſiderable is,

*Obſerv.* *That Chriſt doth leave his Church ſometimes, and brings it very low in their owne apprehenſions, that their hearts faile them for want of his preſence:* So it was with *David*, ſo with *Jonah*, ſo with the Church, *Lam.*3.1. we ſee it at large.

Pſal.38.2.3. Jonah.2.2.

*Reaſon.* The neceſſity of our ſou'es, and of our eſtates require this, as ſometimes a body may be ſo corrupt, that it muſt be brought as low as poſſible may be before there will be a ſpring of new and good bloud and ſpirits; ſo we may fall into ſuch a ſtate of ſecurity that nothing will bring us to a right temper, but extreme purging. And uſually God deales thus with ſtrong wits and parts (if they be holy) *David* and *Solomon* were men excellently qualified, yet when they taſted of the pleaſures and contentments of the world too deep, anſwerable they had, and ſo (uſually) others ſhall have ſuch deſertions as will make them ſmart for their ſweetneſſe, as was ſhewed before.

But upon what occaſions doth a Chriſtian thinke eſpecially, that God doth leave, forſake and fayle him?

*The heart ſinks*

1. *When God appeares an enemy.* Job 7.20.

Firſt, This fayling and fainting of the ſoule is ſometimes upon an apprehenſion, as if God and Chriſt were become enemies, as *Job* ſaith, and as having ſet us as a But to ſhoot at, but this is not all that a gracious and pure heart ſinkes for.

2. *When Chriſts love is abſent and not felt.*

But alſo ſecondly, For the abſence of Chriſts love, though it feele no anger. Even as to a loving

loving Wife, her huſband not looking lovingly upon her as he uſed to doe, is enough to caſt her downe, and cauſe her ſpirits to fayle: ſo for God to looke upon the ſoule, put the caſe not with an angry, yet with a countenance withdrawne, it is ſufficient to caſt it down; for any one that hath dependence upon another, to ſee their countenance withdrawne, and not to ſhew their face as before, if there be but a ſweet diſpoſition in them, it is enough to daunt and diſmay them.

SER. X. *Simile.*

Nay, moreover when they finde not that former aſſiſtance in holy duties, when they finde that their hearts are ſhut up, and they cannot pray as formerly when they had the Spirit of God more fully; and when they finde that they cannot beare afflictions with wonted patience, certainly Chriſt hath withdrawne himſelf (ſay they.) This is firſt done when we heare the word of God not with that delight and profit as we were wont, when they finde how they come near to God in holy communion, and yet feele not that ſweet taſte and reliſh in the ordinances of God as they were wont to doe; they conclude certainly God hath hid his face, whereupon they are caſt down, their ſpirits fayle. And doe not wonder that it ſhould be ſo; for it is ſo in nature; when the Sunne hides it ſelfe many dayes from the world, it is an uncomfortable time, the ſpirits of the creatures lowre and wither; we ſee it ſo in the body, that the animall ſpirits in the braine (which are the cauſe of motion and ſenſe) if they be obſtructed, there followes an *Apoplexie* and deadneſſe. So it is between Chriſt and the ſoule, he is the *Sunne of righteouſneſſe*,

3. *When they miſſe of former aſſiſtance in holy duties.*

Mal. 1.2.

Serm. X.

*ouſneſſe*, by whoſe beames we are all comforted and cheared, which when they are withheld, then our Spirits decay and are diſcouraged. Summer and Winter ariſe from the preſence and abſence of the Sunne. What cauſeth the Spring to be ſo clothed with all thoſe rich ornaments? the preſence of the Sunne which comes nearer then. So what makes the Summer and Winter in the ſoule, but the abſence or preſence of Chriſt? what makes ſome ſo vigorous beyond others, but the preſence of the Spirit? As it is in nature, ſo it is here, the preſence of Chriſt is the cauſe of all ſpirituall life and vigour; who when he withdrawes his preſence a little, the ſoule fayles.

*My ſoule failed when he ſpake to me, I ſought him, but I could not finde him, I called, but he gave me no anſwer.*

*Obſerv.* The Church redoubleth her complaint to ſhew her paſſion, *A large heart hath large expreſſions*; ſhe took it to heart that Chriſt did not ſhew himſelfe in mercy; therefore ſhe never hath done, *I ſought him, but I could not finde him, I called, but he gave me no anſwer.*

*Affection makes eloquent and large expreſſions.*

*Obſerv.* But mainly obſerve from this fayling of the Church, *The difference between the true children of God and others.* The childe of God is caſt down when he finds not the preſence of God, as he was wont, his ſpirits faile. A carnall man that never knew what this preſence meant, regards it not, can abide the want of it; he finds indeed a preſence of God in the creature which he thinks not of; there is a ſweetneſſe in meat, drink, reſt, and

SER. X.

and a contentment in honour, preferment, and riches; and thus God is preſent alwaies with him. But other preſence he cares not for; nay, he ſhuns all other preſence of God labouring to avoid his ſpirituall preſence: For what is the reaſon that a carnall man ſhuns the applying of the word and the thinking of it, but becauſe it brings God near to his heart, and makes him preſent What is the reaſon he ſhuns his own conſcience? that he is loath to heare the juſt and unanſwerable accuſations that it would charge upon him, but becauſe he cannot abide the preſence of God in his conſcience? What is the reaſon he ſhuns the ſight of holier and better men than himſelfe? they preſent God to him being his Image, and call his ſins to memory, and upbraid his wicked life. Hence comes that Satanicall hatred more then humane in carnall vile men, to thoſe that are better than themſelves, becauſe they hate all preſence of God, both in the Word, Miniſtery, and all Gods holy ſervants; all ſuch preſence of God they hate: whereof one maine reaſon is, becauſe they are malefactors, wicked rebels, and intend to be ſo. And as a malefactor cannot endure ſo much as the thought of the Judge, ſo they cannot thinke of God otherwiſe (in that courſe they are in) then of a Judge, whereupon they tremble and quake at the very thought of him, and avoid his preſence.

1 King. 17. 18.

You know that great man *Felix*, *Paul* ſpake to in the *Acts*, when he ſpake of the judgement to come, and thoſe vertues, as Temperance, and Righteouſneſſe, which he was void of, and guilty of

Act. 24. 25.

SER. X.

of the contrary vices, he quaked, and could not endure to heare him ſpeake any longer. Wicked men love not to be arraigned, tormented, accuſed and condemned before their time; therefore whatſoever preſents to them their future terrible eſtate, they cannot abide it. It is an evidence of a man in a curſed condition, thus not to endure the preſence of God; but what ſhall God and Chriſt ſay to them at the day of judgement? It was the deſire of ſuch men not to have to doe with the preſence of God here; and it is juſt with Chriſt to anſwer them there as they anſwer him, now *Depart, depart, we will have none of thy waies* (ſay they) *Depart ye curſed* (ſaith he) He doth but anſwer in their own language, *Depart ye curſed with the Devill and his Angels.*

Mark.5.7.

Job 22.17.

But you ſee the Childe of God is cleane of another temper, he cannot be content to be without the preſence of God and of his Spirit enlightning, quickning, ſtrengthening and bleſſing of him in ſpirituall reſpects. When he finds not his preſence helping him, when he finds Chriſt his life is abſent from him, he is preſently diſcouraged: For, *Chriſt is our life.* Now when a mans life fayles all fayles; when therefore a man finds his ſpirituall taſte and comfort not as it was before, then oh, *the life of my life* hath withdrawne himſelfe, and ſo is never quiet till he have recovered his life againe, for *Chriſt is his life.*

Col.3.4.

Col.3.4.

And becauſe there is a preſence of God and of Chriſt in the Word and Sacraments, a ſweet preſence: the godly ſoule he droops and failes if he be kept from theſe, he will not excommunicate

SERM. X.

cate himſelfe as many doe, that perhaps are aſleep when they ſhould be at the ordinances of God; but if he be excommunicated and baniſhed, O how takes he it to heart! *Pſal.* 42. 1. *As the Hart panteth after the water brooks, ſo longeth my ſoule after thee O God.* The whole 84 Pſalme is to that purpoſe. *O how amiable are thy Tabernacles O Lord of Hoſts!* He finds a preſence of God in his Word and Sacraments, & when he doth not taſte a ſweet preſence of God therein, he droops and ſinks.

A carnall man never heeds theſe things, becauſe he finds no ſweetneſſe in them, but the godly finding Chriſt in them they droop in the want of them, and cannot live without them. *Whither ſhall we goe?* (ſaith *Peter* to Chriſt) *thou haſt the words of eternall life*, I finde my ſould quickned with thy ſpeaking. So a ſoule that feeles the quickning power of the ordinances, he will never be kept from the meanes of ſalvation, but he droops and is never well till he have recovered himſelfe againe? Joh. 6. 68.

Againe, another difference may be obſerved, Carnall men when they finde the ſenſe of Gods anger, they ſeeke not Gods favour, but thinke of worſe and worſe ſtill, and ſo run from God till they be in hell. But thoſe that are Gods children, when they faile and finde the ſenſe of Gods diſpleaſure, they are ſenſible of it, and give not over ſeeking to God, they run not further and further from him.

The Church here though ſhe found not Chriſt preſent with her, yet ſhe ſeeks him ſtill, and never gives over.

Whence

SER. X.
*Obſerv.*

John 6.78.

*That there is a double preſence of Chriſt, felt, and not felt*
1.
*His preſence felt.*

Whence again we may obſerve, *That although the Church be ſaid to faile, and not to finde Chriſt, yet he is preſent then with her.* For who inabled her to ſeeke him? To explaine this, there is a double preſence of Chriſt.

1. *Felt.*
2. *Not felt.*

*The preſence felt*, is when Chriſt is graciouſly preſent, and is withall pleaſed to let us know ſo much, which is a Heaven upon Earth; the ſoule is in Paradiſe then, when ſhe feeles *the love of God ſhed abroad in the heart*, and the favourable countenance of God ſhining upon her, then ſhe deſpiſeth the world, the devill and all, and walks as if ſhe were halfe in Heaven already, for ſhe finds a preſence and a manifeſtation of it, a more glorious ſtate then the world can afford.

2.
*Chriſts unfelt ſecret preſence.*

Mat. 15.

But, *There is a preſence of Chriſt that is ſecret*, when he ſeems to draw us one way, and to drive us another, that we are both driven and drawne at once; when he ſeems to put away, and yet notwithſtanding drawes us; when we finde our ſoules go to Chriſt, there is a drawing power and preſence; but when we finde him abſent, here is a driving away. As we ſee here in the Church, and in the *woman of Canaan*, we ſee what an anſwer ſhe had from Chriſt; at firſt none, and then an uncomfortable, and laſtly a moſt unkind anſwer; *We muſt not give the childrens bread to dogs.* Chriſt ſeemed to drive her away, but at the ſame time he by his Spirit drawes her to him, and was thereby ſecretly preſent in her heart to increaſe her faith. When Chriſt wreſtled with

*Jacob*,

*Jacob*, though he contended with him, yet the ſame time he gave *Jacob* power to overcome him, to be *Iſrael* a prevailer over him: ſo at the ſame time the Church ſeemes to faile and faint; yet notwithſtanding there is a ſecret drawing power pulling her to Chriſt, whereby ſhe never gives over, but ſeeks and calls ſtill after him.

It is good to obſerve this kinde of Chriſts dealing, becauſe it will keep us that we be not diſcouraged when we finde him abſent. If ſtill there be any grace left moving us to that which is good: If we finde the Spirit of God moving us to love the word and ordinances, to call upon him by prayer, and to be more inſtant, certainly we may gather, there is a hidden, ſecret preſence here that drawes to theſe things; nay more, that the end of this ſeeming forſaking and ſtrangeneſſe is to draw us nearer and nearer, and at length to draw us into Heaven to himſelfe. Gods people are gainers by all their loſſes, ſtronger by all their weakneſſes, and the better for all their croſſes whatſoever they are. And you ſhall finde that the Spirit of God is more forceable in them after a ſtrangeneſſe, to ſtir them up more eagerly after Chriſt than before: as here the Church doth for her eagerneſſe, conſtancy and inſtantneſſe, it groweth, as Chriſt withdrawing of himſelfe groweth.

*Uſe 2. How to judge our ſelves in a dead liveleſſe ſtate, both in regard of comfort and holy performances.*

Let us therefore learne hence how to judge of our ſelves, if we be in a dead liveleſſe ſtate, both in regard of comfort and of holy performances, whether we be content to be ſo. If we be not contented, but make towards Chriſt more and more, it is

a

SER. X.

a good ſigne that he hath not forſaken us, that he will come again more gloriouſly then ever before. As here we ſhall ſee after it was with the Church, he ſeems ſtrange, but it is to draw the Church to diſcover her affection, and to make her aſhamed of her former unkindneſſe, and to ſit ſurer and hold faſter then ſhe did before, all ends in a moſt ſweet communion.

*Uſe 2. We ſhould depend upon Chriſt in a ſeeming abſence.*

We ſhould labour therefore to anſwer Chriſts deale in ſutable apprehenſions of ſoul, when he is thus preſent ſecretly, though he ſeem in regard of ſome comforts and former experience of his love to withdraw himſelf. It ſhould teach us to depend upon him, and to beleeve though we feel ſigns of diſpleaſure. If he can love and ſupport me, and ſtrengthen my ſoule, and ſhew it a preſence of that which is fit for me; Certainly I ſhould anſwer thus with my faith, I will depend upon him (though he kill me) as *Job* did; our ſouls ſhould never give over ſeeking of Chriſt, praying and endeavoring, for there is true love where he ſeems to forſake and leave; therefore I ought in theſe deſertions to cleave to him in life and in death.

THE

# The eleventh Sermon.

## Cant. V.VI.VII.

*I opened to my Beloved, but my Beloved had withdrawn himſelfe, and was gone : my ſoule failed when he ſpake; I ſought him, but I could not finde him, I called him, but he gave me no anſwer, &c.*

THe pride and ſecurity of the Spouſe provokes the Lord her Husband oft to bring her very low, they being incompatible with Chriſts reſidence.

*Pride is an affection contrary to his prerogative*, for it ſets up ſomewhat in the ſoul higher then God the higheſt.

Security is a dull temper, or rather diſtemper, that makes the ſoul neglect her watch, and relie upon ſome outward priviledge. Where this ill couple is entertained, there Chriſt uſeth to withdraw himſelf, even to the failing and fainting of the ſoule.

The Spouſe is here in her fainting fit, yet ſhe ſeeks after Chriſt, ſtill ſhe gives not over; ſo *Jonas, I am caſt out of thy preſence* (ſayes he) *yet notwithſtanding I will look toward thy holy Temple*; and David, *Pſal.* 31.22. *I ſaid in my haſte, I am caſt* Jonah 2.

*out*

SER. IX.

*out of thy ſight, yet notwithſtanding thou heardeſt the voyce of my prayer.* He ſaid it, but he ſaid it in his haſte. Gods children are ſurprized on the ſudden to think they are caſt away; but it is in haſte, and ſo ſoon as may be they recover themſelves. *I ſaid, it is my infirmity,* ſaid *David*, *Pſal.* 73. It is but in a paſſion. Here then is the difference between the children of God and others in deſertions, they ariſe, theſe lye ſtill and deſpaire. There is *life in the ſubſtance of the Oake* that makes it lift up its head above ground, though it be cut downe to the ſtumps. Nay we ſee further here, the Church is not taken off for any diſcouragements, but here faith growes ſtronger, as the *womans* of *Canaan* did.

Iſa. 12.

Mat. 15.

1. The Reaſon whereof is, *Faith* lookes to the Promiſe, and to the nature of God, not to his preſent dealing.

2. And then God by a ſecret worke of his Spirit (though he ſeem to be an enemy, yet notwithſtanding) draws his children nearer and nearer to him by ſuch his dealing. All this ſtrangeneſſe is but to mortifie ſome former luſt, or conſume ſome former degrees of ſecurity.

*I ſought him, but I could not finde him.*

Here one of the greateſt diſcouragements of all other is, when prayer (which is left to the Church as a ſalve for all ſores) hath no anſwer. This is the complaint, but indeed an errour of the Church; for Chriſt did heare the Church, though he ſeemed to turn his back.

*But how ſhall we know that God hears our prayers?*

Amongſt many other things this is one; when he

he gives us inward peace, then he heares our prayers, for ſo is the connexion, *Phil.*4. 6. 7.

Or ſecondly, If we finde a Spirit to pray ſtill, a Spirit to wait and to hold out, it is an argument that God either hath or will heare thoſe prayers.

And as it is an argument that God heares our prayers, ſo is it of the preſence of Chriſt; for how could we pray but from his inward preſence? Chriſt was now preſent, and more preſent with the Church when he ſeemed not to be found of her, then he was when ſhe was ſecure; for whence elſe comes this *eagerneſſe of deſire, this ſpirit of Prayer, this earneſtneſſe of ſeeking?*

*I called, but he gave me no anſwer, &c.*

Directions how to carry our ſelves in ſuch an eſtate. How ſhall we carry our ſelves when it fals out that our hearts faile of that we ſeeke for, when we pray without ſucceſſe, and finde not a preſent anſwer, or are in any ſuch like ſtate of deſertion?

1. *We muſt beleeve againſt beleefe* (as it were), *hope againſt hope, and truſt in God.* Howſoever he ſhews himſelfe to us as an oppoſite. It is no matter what his preſent dealing with his Church and Children here is, the nature of Faith is to break through all oppoſition, to ſee the Sun behinde a cloud, nay to ſee one contrary in another, life in death, a calme in a ſtorme, &c.

2. *Labour for an abſolute dependency upon Chriſt with a poverty of Spirit in our ſelves*; this is the end of Chriſts withdrawing himſelf, to purge us of ſelfe confidence and pride.

SER. XI.

*How to know that God ehears our prayers.*

*If he ther with gives us inward peace.*

Phil.4.

2.

*A ſpirit to hold out in prayer though without peace.*

Rom.4.

2. Cor.6.

SER. XI.

3. Stirre up your graces, for as nature joyning with phyſicke helps it to worke and carry away the malignant humors: ſo by the remainder of the Spirit that is in us, let us ſet all our graces on work, untill we have carried away that that offends and clogs the ſoule, and not ſinke under the burden; for this is a ſpeciall time for the exerciſing of faith, hope, love, diligence, care, watchfulneſſe, and ſuch like graces.

And let us know for our comfort, that even this conflicting condition is a good eſtate In a ſick body it is a ſigne of life and health approaching when the humors are ſtirred, ſo as that a man complains that the phyſick works. So when we take to heart our preſent condition, though we faile and finde not what we would, yet this will worke to the ſubduing of corruption at length. *It is a ſigne of future victory, when we are diſcontent with our preſent ill eſtate.* Grace will get the upper hand, as nature doth when the humours are diſturbed.

4. Againe, when we are in ſuch a ſeeming forlorne eſtate, *Let us have recourſe to former experience.* What is the reaſon that God vouchſafes his children for the moſt part in the beginning of their converſion (in their firſt love) experience of his love to raviſhment? It is, that afterwards they may have recourſe to that love of God then felt to ſupport themſelves; and withall to ſtirre up endeavours and hope, that finding it not ſo well with them now, as formerly it hath been, by comparing ſtate with ſtate, deſires may be ſtirred up to be as they were, or rather better.

Hoſ. 2. 7.

And

And as the remembrance of former experiences ſerves to excite endeavours, ſo to ſtirre up *Hope*. I hope it ſhall be as it was, becauſe God is immutable. I change, but Chriſt alters not; the inferior elementary world changes, here is faire weather and foule, but the Sun keeps his perpetuall courſe; and as in the gloomieſt day that ever was, there was light enough to make it day, and to diſtinguiſh it from night (though the Sunne did not ſhine:) So in the moſt diſconſolate ſtate of a Chriſtian ſoule, there is light enough in the ſoule, to ſhew that the *Sun of Righteouſneſſe* is there, and that Chriſt hath ſhined upon the ſoule, that it is day with the ſoule, and not night. Pſal. 112. 4.

5. And learne when we are in this condition to wait Gods leaſure, for he hath waited ours. It is for our good, to prepare us for further bleſſings, to mortifie and ſubdue our corruptions, to inlarge the capacity of the ſoule, that the Lord abſents himſelfe, therefore *Bernard* ſaith well, *Tibi accidit*, &c. *Chriſt comes and goes away for our good*; when he withdrawes the ſenſe of his love, the ſoule thereupon is ſtretched with deſire, that it may be as it was in former time, in the dayes of old. Thus much for that, *I ſought him, but I could not finde him, I called, but he gave me no anſwer.*

Here we muſt anſwer one objection before we leave the words. *This ſeems to contradict other Scriptures, which promiſe that thoſe that ſeeke ſhall finde.* It is true, they that ſeeke ſhall finde, but not preſently, Gods times are the beſt and fitteſt. They that ſeeke ſhall finde, if they ſeek conſtant- *Object.* Mat. 7. 7. *Anſw.*

ly with their whole heart in all the meanes Some doe not finde, becauſe they ſeeke in one meanes and not in another; they ſeeke Chriſt in reading, and not in the ordinance of hearing, in private meditations, but not in the communion of Saints; we muſt goe through all meanes to ſeeke Chriſt, not one muſt be left. Thus if we will ſeeke him, undoubtedly he will make good his promiſe; nay in ſome ſort, *he is found before he is ſought*, for he is in our ſoules to ſtirre up deſire of ſeeking him; he prevents us with deſires, and anſwers us in ſome ſort before we pray; *when he gives us a Spirit of Prayer, it is a pledge to us, that he meanes to anſwer us.* Therefore it is a ſpirituall deceit, when we thinke Chriſt is not in us, and we are neglected of him, becauſe we have not all that we would have. Among many other deceits that Chriſtians deceive themſelves with in this kinde, theſe be two:

Iſa. 63 34.

*Iudging of grace by the quantity, and not by the value.*

1. Pet. 1.

1. That they judge grace *by the quantity, and not by the value and price of it*, whereas the leaſt meaſure of grace and comfort is to be eſteemed, becauſe *it is an immortall ſeed* caſt into the ſoule by an immortall God, the *Father of eternity*.

*Iudging of our ſelves by ſenſe and feeling.*

2. Another deceit is, That we judge of our ſelves by ſenſe and feeling, and not by faith.

*The watchmen that went about the City found me, and ſmote me, and tooke away my vaile from me.*

Here the poore Church after the ſetting down of her own exerciſe in her deſertion, now ſets out ſome outward ill dealing ſhe met with, and that from thoſe that ſhould have been her greateſt comforters. *The watchmen that went about the City found*

*found me, they wounded me, the keepers of the wals tooke away my vaile from me.*

Thus we ſee how trouble followes trouble, *One depth calls upon another: Inward deſertion and outward affliction goe many times together.* The troubles of the Church many times are like *Jobs* meſſengers, they come faſt one upon another; becauſe God meanes to perfect the work of Grace in their hearts, all this is for their good. *The ſharper the Winter, the better the Spring.* Learne hence firſt of all therefore in generall,

*That it is no eaſie thing to be a ſound Chriſtian.* *Obſerv.*

We ſee here when the Church had betrothed her ſelfe to Chriſt, and entertained him into her garden, there after ſhe fals into a ſtate of ſecurity and ſleep, whence Chriſt labours to rouze her up, then ſhe uſeth him unkindely; after which he withdrawes himſelfe, even ſo farre that *her heart fayles her*; then (as if this were not enough) the watchmen that ſhould have looked to her, *they ſmite her, wound her, and take away her vayle.* See here the variety of the uſage of the Church, and changes of a Chriſtian, not long in one ſtate, he is ebbing and flowing.

Therefore let none diſtaſte the way of Godlineſſe for this, that it is ſuch a ſtate as is ſubject to change and variety; whereas carnall men are upon their lees and finde no changes.

But you will ſay, *All Chriſtians are not thus toſſed up and downe, ſo deſerted of God, and perſecuted of others.* *Object.*

I anſwer, Indeed there is difference. Whence comes that difference? from Gods liberty, it is a *Anſw.*

SER. XI.

myſtery of the Sanctuary, which no man in the world can give a reaſon of, why of Chriſtians both equally beloved of God, ſome ſhould have a fairer paſſage to heaven, others rougher and more rugged; It is a myſtery hid in Gods breaſt. It is ſufficient for us if God will bring us any way to Heaven, as the bleſſed Apoſtle ſaith, *If by any meanes I might attaine to the reſurrection of the dead*, either through thick or thin, if God will bring me to Heaven, it is no matter, *If I by any meanes.*

Phil. 3. 11.

*The Watchmen that went about the City, ſmote me, &c.*

By the *Watchmen* here are meant eſpecially governours of State and Church.

*Why are they called Watchmen?*

It is a borrowed ſpeech taken from the cuſtome of Cities that are beleaguered; for policies ſake they have Watchmen to diſcry the danger they are lyable unto; ſo Magiſtrates be watchmen of the State, Miniſters are the Watchmen for Soules, watching over our Soules for good.

Heb. 13. 17.

*Queſt.* *Why doth God uſe Watchmen?*

*Anſw.* Not for any defect of power in him, but for demonſtration of his goodneſs; for he is the great Watchman, who watcheth over our Commonwealths, Churches and Perſons; he hath an eye that never ſleeps; *He that watcheth Iſrael neither ſlumbers nor ſleeps*; yet notwithſtauding he hath ſubordinate Watchmen, not for defect of power but for demonſtration of goodneſſe; he manifeſts his goodneſſe in that he will uſe variety of ſubordinate Watchers.

Pſal. 121. 4.

And likewiſe to ſhew his power in uſing many inſtruments

Serr. XI.

inſtruments, and his care for us when he keeps us together with his owne ſubordinate means.

And in this that God hath ſet over us Watchers (Miniſters eſpecially) it implyes that *our ſouls are in danger*; and indeed there is nothing in the world ſo beſet as the ſoule of a poore Chriſtian; Who hath ſo many and ſo bad enemies as a Chriſtian? and amongſt them all, the worſt and greatteſt enemy he hath is neareſt to him, and converſeth daily with him, even himſelfe. Therefore there muſt needs be *Watchmen* to diſcover the deceits of Satan and his inſtruments, and of our owne hearts, to diſcover the dangers of *Ieruſalem*, and the errours and ſins of the times wherein we live. The Church is in danger, for God hath ſet watchmen, now God and Nature doth nothing in vaine or needleſly.

*Arguments ſhewing the precious neſſe of the ſoule.*

Againe in that God takes ſuch care for the ſoule, it ſhewes the woudrous worth of it. Many arguments there be to ſhew that the ſoule is a precious thing; it was breathed by God at firſt, Chriſt gave his life to redeeme it; but this is an eſpeciall one that God hath ordained and eſtabliſhed a Miniſtery and Watchmen over it. And as God hath ſet ſome men Watchmen over others, ſo hath he appointed every man to be a Watchman to himſelfe. He hath given every man a City to watch over, that is, his owne eſtate and ſoule; therefore let us not depend altogether on the watching of others. *God hath planted a conſcience in every of us*, and uſeth as others to our good; ſo our own care, wiſedom, and foreſight, theſe he elevateth and ſanctifieth.

SER. XI.

*The Watchmen that went about the City found me, they ſmote me, they wounded me, &c.*

*How the Church was wounded by the Watchmen.*

Come we now to the carriage of theſe Watchmen, thoſe that ſhould have been defenſive prove moſt offenſive.

They ſmote the Church, and wounded her many wayes (though it be not diſcovered here in particular) as with their ill and ſcandalous

1. life, and ſometimes with *corrupt Doctrine*,

2. and other whiles with bitter words, and their

3. unjuſt *cenſures*, as we ſee in the ſtory of the Church,

3 Joh. 9. eſpecially the *Romiſh Church*, they have excommunicated Churches and Princes; but not to ſpeak of thoſe Synagogues of Satan, come we nearer home, and we may ſee amongſt our ſelves ſometimes thoſe that are Watchmen, and ſhould be for encouragement, they ſmite and wound the

3 Joh. 10. Church, and take away her vaile.

*What is it to take away the vaile?*

You know in the times of the *Old Teſtament* a vaile was that which covered women for modeſty, to ſhew their ſubjection; and it was likewiſe an honorable ornament, *They tooke away the vaile*, that is, that wherewith the Chrcuh was covered, they took away that that made the Church comele, and laid her open, and as it were naked.

Now both theſe wayes, the Churches vaile is taken away by falſe and naughty Watchmen.

1. *They took away the vaile of her ſubjection.*

1. As the *vaile* is a token of ſubjection, when by their falſe Doctrines they labour to draw people from Chriſt, and their ſubjection to him.

The Church is Chriſts Spouſe, the vaile was a token of ſubjection: Now they that draw the people

SER. XI.

people to themſelves, as in Popiſh Churches, that deſire to ſit high in the conſciences of people, and ſo make the Church undutifull, *They take away the vail of ſubjection*, and ſo force Chriſt to puniſh the Church, as we ſee in the former ages.

2. As the vaile is for honour & comlineſſe, ſo *they take away the vaile of the Church*, when *they take away the credit and eſteem of the Church*, when they lay open the infirmities and weakneſſes of the Church. This is ſtrange that the Watchmen ſhould do this, yet notwithſtanding oftentimes it fals out ſo, that thoſe that by place are Watchmen, are the bittereſt enemies of the Church. Who were bitterer enemies of the poore Church in Chriſts time then the *Scribes*, *Phariſees* and *Prieſts*?

2. *The vaile of her honour and comlineſſe.*

And ſo in the time of the *Prophets*, who were the greateſt enemies the Church had, but falſe *Prieſts and Prophets*?

*What is the ground of this, that thoſe men that by their ſtanding ſhould be encouragers are rather dampers of the Churches Zeale in purſuit of it?*

*Queſt.*

There are many grounds of it.

Sometimes it fals out from a ſpirit of envy in them at the graces of Gods people which are wanting in themſelves, they would not have others better than themſelves.

*Anſw.* *Why the watchmen are the wounders of the Church.*

Sometimes from Idleneſſe, which makes them hate all ſuch as provoke them to pains; they raiſe up the dignity of outward things too much, as we ſee in Popery, they make every thing to confer grace, as if they had a ſpeciall vertue in them; but they neglect that wherewith God hath joyned an efficacy, his own ordinances.

This

SER. XI.

*Vſe.* 1. This ſhould teach us, *To be in love with Chriſts government*, and to ſee the vanity of all things here below, though they be never ſo excellent in their ordinance. Such is the poyſon of mans heart, and the malice of Satan, that they turn the edge of the beſt things againſt the good of the Church.

What is more excellent then Magiſtracy? yet many times the point of the ſword is directed the wrong way. *I have ſaid, ye are Gods, Pſal.* 82.6. They ſhould govern, as God himſelf would governe, and aske with themſelves, Would God now if he were a Watchman of the State do thus and thus? but I wiſh wofull experience did not witneſs the contrary.

2 Cor. 5. 20. So *Miniſters* are *Chriſts Ambaſſadors*, and ſhould carry themſelves even as Chriſt would do; they ſhould ſtrengthen the feeble knees, and binde up the broken hearted, not diſcourage and not ſowe

Ezek. 13. 18. pillowes under the arme-holes of wicked and carnall men: But alas, we ſee the edge of the ordinance is oftentimes turned another way by the corrupt, proud, unbroken hearts of men, and the malice of Satan.

*Vſe* 2. Againe it ſhould teach us, not to thinke the worſe of any for the diſgraces of the times. The Watchmen here take away the vaile of the Church, and her forwardneſſe is diſgraced by them: take heed therefore we entertaine not raſh conceits of others, upon the entertainment they finde abroad in the world, or among thoſe that have a ſtanding in the Church; for ſo we ſhall condemne Chriſt himſelfe; how was he judged of the *Prieſts*, *Scribes*, and *Phariſees* in his times?

and

and this hath been the lot of the Church in all ages, the true members thereof were called Hereticks and Schiſmaticks, *the vaile was taken off.* It is the poyſoynfull pride of mans heart, that when it cannot raiſe it ſelfe by its own worth, it will endeavour to raiſe it ſelfe by the ruine of others credit through lying ſlanders. The Devill was firſt a ſlanderer, and lyar, and then a murtherer; he cannot murther without he ſlander-firſt; the credit of the Church muſt firſt be taken away, and then ſhe is wounded; otherwiſe as it is a uſuall proverb, *Thoſe that kill a dog make the world beleeve that he was mad firſt:* ſo they alwaies firſt traduced the Church to the world, and then perſecuted her, *Truth hath alwaies a ſcratcht face.* Falſhood many times goes under better habits then its owne, which God ſuffers to exerciſe our skill and wiſdom, that we might not depend upon the raſh judgement of others, but might conſider what grounds they have; not what men do, or whom they oppoſe, but from what cauſe: Whether from a Spirit of *Envy, Idleneſſe, Iealouſie,* and *Pride,* or from good grounds: Elſe if Chriſt himſelfe were on earth againe, we ſhould condemne him, as now men do the generation of the juſt, whom they ſmite and wound, and take away their *vaile* from them.

Joh. 8.

THE

# The twelfth Sermon.

## Cant. V. VII.

*The Watchmen that went about the City found me, they ſmote me, they wounded me, the Keepers of the wals tooke away my vaile from me.*

THe *Watchmen*, (Thoſe that by their place and ſtanding ſhould be ſo) they ſmote the Church (as *Bernard* complaines almoſt 500 yeares agoe) Alas, alas, ſaith he, thoſe that doe ſeeke priviledges in the Church, are the firſt in perſecuting it; and (as his faſhion is to ſpeak in a kinde of Rhetoricke) they were not paſtors, but impoſtors. There be ordinances without which the world cannot ſtand.

1. *Magiſtracie.*
2. *Miniſtery.*

Magiſtrates are nurſing Fathers, and nurſiing Mothers to the Church.

Miniſters are *Watchmen* by their place and ſtanding.

Now for Shepherds to become *wolves*, for Watchmen to become *ſmiters*, what a pitifull thing it is! but thus it is, the Church hath been alwaies perſecuted with theſe men, under pretence

tents of Religion, which is the ſharpeſt perſecution of all in the Church, it is a grievous thing to ſuffer of an enemy, but worſe of a country man, worſe then that of a friend, and worſt of all of the Church. Notwithſtanding (by the way) we muſt know, that the perſecuted cauſe is not a way the beſt (as *Auſtin* was forced to ſpeake in his time againſt the *Donatiſts*) *Sarah* was a type of the true, and *Hagar* of the falſe Church. Now *Sarah* ſhe corrected *Hagar*, therefore it followes not, that the ſuffering cauſe is alway the better; therefore we muſt judge of things in theſe kind of paſſages by the cauſe, and not by the outward carriage of things. *They took away my vaile.*

*The perſecuted ſide is not alwayes the beſt.*

*What ſhall we doe in ſuch caſes, if we ſuffer any indignity, if the vaile be taken off?* That is, if our ſhame, infirmities, and weakneſſes be laid open by falſe imputations.

In this caſe, it is *the innocency of the Dove*, that is to be laboured for, and withall the wiſdome of the *Serpent*. If innocency will not ſerve, labour for wiſdome, as indeed it will not alone, the wicked would then labour for ſubtility to diſgrace righteous perſons. *Anſw.*

But what if that will not ſerve neither? Chriſt was wiſdom it ſelfe, yet he ſuffered moſt, when *Innocencie* and *wiſdome* will not do it (becauſe we muſt be conformable to our head) *then we muſt labour for patience*, knowing that one haire of our heads ſhall not fall to the ground without the providence of the Almighty. Commend our caſe, as Chriſt did, by faith & prayer to God that judgeth. *Obiect.* *Anſw.*

*I charge you, O Daughters of Ieruſalem if you ſee*

SER. XII.

*see my Beloved, that you tell him, that I am ſicke of Love, &c.*

Here the Church after her ill uſage of the Watchmen, is forced to the ſociety of other Chriſtians, not ſo well acquainted with Chriſt as her ſelfe: *I charge ye O Daughters of Jeruſalem, if you finde my Beloved, &c. tell him, &c.* What ſhall they *tell him?*

*Tell him I am ſicke of Love.*

The Church is reſtleſſe in her deſire and purſuit after Chriſt, till ſhe finde him, no oppoſition you ſee can take off her endeavour.

1. *Chriſt ſeems to leave her inwardly.*

2. *Then ſhe goeth to the Watchmen, they ſmite and wound her.*

3. *Then ſhe hath recourſe to the Daughters of Jeruſalem for helpe.*

Generally before we come to the particulars, from the connexion we may obſerve this,

*Obſerv.* *That Love is a fire kindled from Heaven.*

Cant. 8. 7. Nothing in the world will quench this Grace, no oppoſition, nay oppoſition rather whets and kindles endeavour.

*How farre we may be ſenſible of injuries.*

Iſa. 38. The Church was nothing diſcouraged by the ill uſage of the Watchmen, onely ſhe complaines ſhe is not inſenſible. A Chriſtian may without ſin be ſenſible of indignities, only it muſt be *the mourning of Doves, and not the roaring of Bears.* It muſt not be murmuring and impatiency, but an humble complaining to God, that he may take our caſe to heart, as the Church doth here; But as ſenſible as ſhe was, ſhe was not a whit diſcouraged, but ſeeks after Chriſt ſtill in other means;

if

if ſhe finde him not in one, ſhe will try in an other: we ſee here the nature of love, if it be in any meaſure perfect, it caſteth out all feare of diſcouragements.

*The nature of true Grace.*

And indeed, *It is the nature of true Grace to grow up with difficulties:* As the *Arke* roſe higher with the waters, ſo likewiſe the ſoule growes higher and higher, it mounts up as diſcouragements and oppoſitions grow: Nay, the ſoule takes vigour and ſtrength from diſcouragements, as the wind increaſeth the flame: So the Grace of God, the more the winds and waves of afflictions oppoſe it, with ſo much the more violence it breaks through all oppoſitions, untill it attaine the deſired hope.

*A ſigne of coldneſſe in Religion.*

To apply it, Thoſe therefore that are ſoone diſcouraged, that pull in their horns preſently, it is a ſigne they are very cold, and have but little grace; for where there is any ſtrength of holy affection, they will not be diſcouraged, nor their zeale be quenched and damped; therefore they ſubordinate Religion to their owne ends, as your temporary beleevers. Where is any love to Chriſt? the love of Chriſt is of a violent nature, it ſwayes in the heart, as the Apoſtle ſpeaks, *The love of Chriſt conſtraineth us.* 2 Cor. 5. 14.

*Uſe of encouragement and tryall.*

If we finde this inconquerable reſolution in our ſelves, notwithſtanding all diſcouragements, to goe on in a good cauſe, let us acknowledge that fire to be from Heaven, let us not loſe ſuch an argument of the ſtate of Grace, as ſuffering of afflictions with joy. The more we ſuffer the more we ſhould rejoyce, if the cauſe be good, as the Apoſtles,

SER. XII.

Apoſtles *Act.* 5. 41. rejoyced *that they were accounted worthy to ſuffer any thing.*

*I charge you, Oh Daughters of Ieruſalem, if you finde my Beloved, that ye tell him I am ſick of Love.*

Shee goes to the *Daughters of Ieruſalem* for help, whence we may learne,

*Obſerv.* That, *If we finde not comfort in one means, we muſt have recourſe to another.*

If we finde not Chriſt preſent in one, ſeek him in another, and perhaps we ſhall finde him where we leaſt thought of him; ſometimes there is more comfort in the ſociety of poore Chriſtians, than of the Watchmen themſelves.

*I charge you, O Daughters of Ieruſalem, &c.*

Where we have,

1. A charge given.

2. The parties charged, *the Daughters of Ieruſalem.*

3. The particular thing they are charged with, that is (if they finde Chriſt) *to tell him ſhe is is ſicke of Love.*

*The proportion between Ieruſalem and the Church.*

The parties charged are *the Daughters of Ieruſalem*, the Daughters of the Church, which is called *Ieruſalem*, from ſome reſemblances between *Ieruſalem* and the Church; ſome few ſhall be touched, to give light to the point.

1. Pſal. 122. 3. *Ieruſalem, was a City compact in it ſelfe* (as the Pſalmiſt ſaith) ſo is the Church, the body of Chriſt.

2. *Ieruſalem* was choſen from all places of the world, to be the ſeat of God: ſo the Church is the ſeat of Chriſt, he dwelsthere in the hearts of his children.

It

Serm. XII.

It is said of *Ierusalem*, they went up to *Ierusalem*, and downe to *Egypt*, and other places: So the Church is from above, *The way of wisedom is on high*, Religion is upward, Grace, Glory, and Comfort come from above, and draw our minds up to have our conversation and our desires above. 3. Gal. 4. 26. Prov. 15. 24.

*Ierusalem was the joy of the whole earth*: so the Church of God: what were the world without it, but a company of incarnate Devils? 4. Psal. 48 3.

*In Ierusalem Records were kept of the names of all the Citizens there*; so all the true Citizens of the Church, their names are written in the booke of life in Heaven. 5. Heb. 12 23.

The *Daughters* of *Ierusalem* therefore are the true members of the Church that are both bred and fed in the Church. Let us take a tryall of our selves, whether we be *Daughters* of *Ierusalem* or no. That we may make this tryall of our selves. 1 Pet. 1 10. 1 Pet. 2. 2.

1. *If we finde freedom in our conscience from terrours and feares.* If we finde spirituall liberty and freedom to serve God, it is a signe that we are *Daughters of Ierusalem*, because *Ierusalem* was free. *Observ.* How to know that we are Daughters of Ierusalem. Gal. 4. 16.

2. Or if we minde things above, and things of the Church; If we take to heart the cause of the truth, it is a signe we are true *Daughters of Ierusalem*. We know what the Psalmist saith, *Let my right hand forget her cunning, If I forget thee O Ierusalem, if I do not prefer Jerusalem before my chief joy.* If the cause of the Church goe to our hearts, if we can joy in the Churches joy, and mourne in the Churches abasement and suffering, it is a signe we are true *Daughters of Ierusalem*, and lively members of the body of Christ. Otherwise, Psal. 137. 5. 6.

.IIX.22S

when we heare that the Church goes downe, and that the adverſe part prevailes, and we joy, it is a ſigne we are daughters of *Babylon* and not of *Ieruſalem*.

Therefore let us aske our affections what we are, as *Auſtin* writes excellently in his booke *de Civitate Dei*, ask thy heart of what City thou art.

But what ſaith the Church to the *Daughters of Ieruſalem* in the firſt place?

*I charge you.*

It is a kinde of admiration ſupplied thus, I charge you as you love me your Siſter, as you love Chriſt, as you tender my caſe that am thus uſed, as you will make it good that you are *Daughters of Ieruſalem*, and not of *Babylon*, *tell my Beloved that I am ſick of Love.* It is a ſtrong charge, a defective ſpeech, which yeelds us this obſervation:

*Obſerv.* *That true affections are ſerious in the things of God and of Religion.*

She layes a weight upon them, *I charge you O Daughters of Ieruſalem.* True impreſſions have ſtrong expreſſions; therefore are we cold in matters of Religion in our diſcourſes, it is becauſe we want theſe inward impreſſions. The Church here was full, ſhe could not containe her ſelfe in regard of the largeneſſe of her affections, *I charge you O Daughters of Ieruſalem*, &c.

*A ſigne of unbeliefe and coldneſſe.*

We may finde the truth of Grace in the heart by the diſcoveries and expreſſions in the converſation in generall.

*I charge you, O daughters of Ieruſalem, if you finde my Beloved, that ye tell him I am ſicke of Love.*

The

SER. XII.

The Church here ſpeaks to others meaner than her ſelfe, ſhe ſhould have the Church tell Chriſt by Prayer, (the ſureſt intelligence) how ſhe was uſed, how ſhe languiſhed, and was ſicke for him, and cannot be without him.

*Why did not the Church tell Chriſt her ſelfe?* *Queſt.*

So ſhe did as well as ſhe could, but ſhe deſired the help of the Church this way alſo. Sometimes it is ſo with the Children of God, that they cannot pray ſo well as they ſhould, and as they would doe, becauſe the waters of the ſoule are ſo troubled, that they can doe nothing but utter groanes and ſighes, eſpecially in a ſtate of deſertion, as *Hezekiah* could but chatter, and *Moſes* could not utter a word at the red Sea, though he did ſtrive in his Spirit, in ſuch caſes they muſt be beholding to the help of others. *Anſw.*

Sometimes a man is in body ſicke (as *James* ſaith) *If any man be ſick, let him ſend for the Elders, and let them pray.* There may be ſuch diſtemper of body and ſoule, that we are unfit to lay open our eſtate to our own content. It is oft ſo with the beſt of Gods Children; not that God doth not reſpect thoſe broken ſighes and deſires, but they give not content to the ſoule. The poore palſie-man in the Goſpell not able to goe himſelfe was carried on the ſhoulders of others, and let through the houſe to Chriſt: oft-times we may be in a palſie eſtate, that we cannot bring our ſelves to Chriſt; but we muſt be content to be borne to him by others. Jam. 5. 14. Mar. 2. 2, 3.

*I charge you O Daughters of Jeruſalem, that you tell my Beloved, I am ſicke of Love.*

Ser. XII.

Whence the point that I desire you would observe, is,

*Observ.* *That at such times as we find not our spirits inlarged from any cause outward & inward to comfort & joy; then is a time to desire the prayers & help of others.*

It is good to have a stock going every where, and those thrive the best that have most prayers made for them; have a stock going in every countrey; this is the happinesse of the Saints. To inforce this instruction, to desire the prayers of others, we must discover, that there is a wondrous force in the prayers of Christians one for another. It is more than a complement, would it were thought so.

Rom. 15 30. The great Apostle *Paul*, see how he desires the *Romans*, that they would strive and contend with God after a holy violence, by their joynt prayers for him, so he desires the *Thessalonians* 2 Thes. 3. 2. that they would pray for him, *That he might be delivered from unreasonable men.* It is usuall with him to say, *pray, pray*, and for us too, for such are gracious in the Court of Heaven. Despise none in this case, a true [illegible]-right experienced Christians prayers are [illegible] esteeme with God. Mat. 26. Our blessed Saviour [illegible], when he was to goe into the Garden, though his poore Disciples were sleepy, and very untoward, yet he wou'd have their society and prayers.

*I charge you O Daughters of Jerusalem, if you finde my Beloved, that ye tell him I am sicke of Love.*

To speak a little of the matter of the charge, *I am sicke of Love*, I love him, because I have found former comfort, strength and sweetnesse from

from him, that I cannot be without him. To be Love-ſicke then in the preſence of the Church, is to have ſtrong affections to Chriſt, from which comes wondrous diſquietneſſe of Spirit in his abſence. Here is ſomewhat good, and ſomewhat ill. This is firſt her vertue, that ſhe did fervently love; this was her infirmity, that ſhe was ſo much diſtempered with her preſent want: Theſe two breeds this ſickneſſe of love, whence we obſerve,

SER. XII.

*Love-ſicke what.*

*Where the thing loved is not preſently anſwerable to the deſires of the ſoul that loves, there followes diſquiet and diſtemper of affections; That is here termed ſickneſſe of Love.*

The Reaſon hereof is, *Naturall contentment is an union with the thing Loved.* The more excellent the thing is that is loved, the more content ment there is in communion with it, and where it is in any degree or meaſure hindred, there is diſquiet: anſwerable to the contentment in enjoying, is the griefe, ſorrow, and ſickneſſe in parting. The happineſſe of the Church conſiſting in ſociety with Chriſt; therefore it is her miſery and ſickneſſe to be deprived of him, not to enjoy him whom her ſoule ſo dearly loveth. There are few in the world ſicke of this diſeaſe, I would there were more ſick of the love of Chriſt; there are many that ſurfet rather of fulneſſe, who thinke we have too much of this *Manna*, of this preaching of this Goſpell, there is too much of this knowledge, of the ordinances, theſe are not ſicke of love.

Make a Uſe therefore of Tryall, whether we be in the ſtate of the Church or no, *by valuing*

*Uſe.*

Ser. XII.

*and prizing the presence of Christ in his ordinances,* the *Word* and *Sacraments*.

There are many fond sicknesses in the world, there is *Amnons* sicknesse, that was sick of love for his sister *Thamar*, his countenance discovered it, and *Ahab* he is sick in desiring his Neighbours vineyard: You have many strange sicknesses, many sicke with fires kindled from the flesh, from Hell, but few sick of this sicknesse here spoken of.

2 Sam 13.2.

1 King. 12.4.

1. If we finde our selves carried to Christ, to run in that stream as strong as the affections of those that are distempered with sicknesse of the love of other things, it will discover to us whether we be truly *Love-sicke* or not.

2. Take a man that is sicke for any earthly thing, whether of *Ahabs* or *Amnons sicknesse*, or of any thing, take it as you will, *That which the soule is sicke of in love, it thinks of daily*; it dreames of it in the night. What doe our soules therefore thinke of? what doe our meditations run after? When we are in our advised and best thoughts, what doe we most thinke of? if of Christ, of the state of the Church here, of Grace and Glory, all is well; what makes us in the midst of all worldly discontentments to thinke all dung and drosse in comparision of Christ; but this sicknesse of love to Christ? If our love be in such a degree, as it makes us sicke of it, it makes us not to heare what we heare, not to see what we see, not to regard what is present; the soule is in a kinde of extasie, it is carried so strongly, and taken up with things of Heaven; it is deaded to other things, when our eyes are no more led with vanity then if we had none,

none, and the fleſh is ſo mortified, as if we were dead men, by reaſon of the ſtrength of our affections that runne another way to better things which are above. SER. XII.

Thus we ſee it is in *Love:* Talke with a man that is in any heat of affections, you talke with one that is not at home, you talke with one abſent, *The ſoule is more where it loves, than where it dwels.* Surely where love is in any ſtrength, it drawes up the ſoule, ſo that a man oft-times in his calling and ordinary imployments doth not heed them, but paſſeth through the world as a man at randome, he regards not the things of the world: for Chriſt is gotten into his heart, and drawes all the affections to himſelfe. Where the affection of love is ſtrong, it cares not what it ſuffers for the party loved, nay it glories in it. As it is ſaid of the *Diſciples*, when they were whipped and ſcourged for preaching the Goſpell, it was a matter of Glory to them: *it is not labour, but favour*: it is not labour and vexation, but favour that is taken where love is, to the party loved; where the love of Chriſt is (which was here in the Church) labour is no labour, ſuffering is no ſuffering, trouble is no trouble. 3. Acts 5.41.

Againe, *it is the property of the party that is ſicke of this diſeaſe to take little contentment in other things.* Tell a covetous worldling that is in love with the world a diſcourſe of learning, what cares he for learning? tell him of a good bargaine, of a matter of gaine, and he will hearken to that. So it is with the ſoule that hath felt the love of Chriſt ſhed abroad in the heart, tell him of the world 4.

Ser. XII.

(especially if he want that which he desires, the peace and strength that he found from Christ in former times) he relisheth not your discourse.

Labour we therefore every day more and more, to have larger and larger affections to Christ. The soule that loves Christ, the nearer to Christ, the more joyfull it is, when he thinks of those mutuall embracings, when Christ and his soule shall meet together, this happinesse is there where the soule enjoyes the thing loved, but that is not here, but in Heaven; therefore in the mean time with joy he thankfully frequents the places where Christ is present in the Word and Sacrament, and that we may come to have this affection.

Let us see what our soules are without him, meere dungeons of darknesse and confusion, nothing comming from us that is good, this will breed love to the ordinances, and then we shall relish Christ, both in the *Word* and *Sacrament*; for he is food for the hungry soule, and requires nothing of us but good appetites; and this will make us desire his love and presence.

THE

# The eleventh Sermon.

## Cant. V. VIII. IX.

*I charge you O Daughters of Ieruſalem, if ye finde my Beloved, that ye tell him I am ſick of love.*
*What is thy Beloved more than another Beloved, O thou faireſt among women,* &c.

THe ſoule as it is of an immortall ſubſtance, ſo in the right and true temper thereof, aſpireth towards immortality, unleſſe when it is clouded and overpreſt with that *which proſſeth downewards, and the ſin which hangeth ſo faſt on* (as the Apoſtle ſpeaks) which is the reaſon of thoſe many and divers toſſings and turmoylings of the enlightened ſoule, now up, now down, now running amaine homewards, and now againe ſluggiſh, idle and lazie, untill rouſed up by extraordinary meanes it puts on againe; as the fire mounteth upwards unto its proper place; and as the needle ſtill trembleth till it ſtand at the *North*, ſo the ſoule once inflamed with an heavenly fire, and acquainted with her firſt originall, cannot be at reſt untill it find it ſelf in that comfortable way which certainly leads homewards.

Heb. 12. 1.

*Simile.*

An

SER. XIII.

An inſtance whereof we have in the Church here, who having loſt her ſweet communion with Chriſt, and ſo paid dearly for her former neglect and ſleighting his kinde invitations (as being troubled, reſtleſſe in minde, *beaten and wounded by the watchmen*, bereft of her vaile, &c.) Yet this heavenly fire of the bleſſed Spirit, this *water of life* ſo reſtleſſly ſpringing in her, makes her *ſickneſſe of love* and ardent deſire after Chriſt to be ſuch, that ſhe cannot containe her ſelfe, but breaks forth into this paſſionate charge and requeſt.

Joh. 4.

*I charge you O Daughters of Jeruſalem, if ye finde my Beloved, that ye tell him I am ſicke of Love.*

Thus we may ſee that the way to heaven is full of changes, the ſtrength of corruption overclouds many times and damps our joyes. How many ſeverall tempers hath the Church been in? Sometimes ſhe is all compounded of joy, vehemently deſiring kiſſes of her beſt beloved, ſhe holds her beloved faſt, and will not let him goe, and ſometimes againe ſhe is gone, hath loſt her beloved, is in a ſea of troubles, ſeeks and cannot finde him, becomes ſluggiſh, negligent, overtaken with ſelf-love, after which when ſhe hath ſmarted for her omiſſions (as here againe) ſhe is all a fire after Chriſt (as we ſay) no ground will hold her, away ſhe flies after him, and is reſtleſſe untill ſhe finde him. Where by the way we ſee, *That permanency and ſtabilty is for the life to come, here our portion is to expect changes, ſtormes and tempeſts*; therefore they muſt not be ſtrange to particular perſons, ſince it is the portion of the whole Church, which thus by ſufferings and conformity

conformity to the head must enter into glory, whiles God makes his power perfect in our weakneſſe, overcomes Satan by unlikely meanes, and ſo gets himſelfe the glory, even out of our greateſt infirmities, temptations, and abaſements. 2 Cor. 4 17. 2 Cor. 12 9.

But God though he make all things worke for good unto his children, even the Devill, ſinne and death, deſertions, afflictions and all; yet we muſt be warned hereby not to tempt God, by neglecting the meanes appointed for our comfortable paſſage; but open to Chriſt when he knockes, imbrace him joyfully in his ordinances, and let our hearts fly open unto him: for though (through his Mercy) our wounds be cured; yet who would be wounded to try ſuch dangerous experiments, as here befell the Church in her deſertions, for her ſluggiſh negligence, deadneſſe, and ſelf-love. Rom. 8, 28.

So that we ſee there is nothing gotten by favouring our ſelves in carnall liberty, ſecurity, or by yeelding to the fleſh. The Church ſtood up on termes with Chriſt when he would have come in to her, but what enſued hereupon? ſhe fell into a grievous deſertion; and not onely ſo, but finds very hard uſage abroad, all which ſhe might have prevented by watchfulneſſe, carefulneſſe and opening to Chriſt knocking. It is a ſpirituall errour to which we are all prone, to thinke that much is gained by favouring our ſelves, but we ſhall finde it otherwiſe. See here againe that God will beare with nothing though in his owne; but he will ſharply puniſh them even for omiſſions, and that not only with deſertion, but ſometimes they ſhall meet with oppoſitions in the world.

*David*

SER. XII.

1 Sam. 1. Amos 3. 2.

*David* cannot eſcape with a proud thought in numbring of the people, but he muſt ſmart for it, and his people alſo. God is wondrous carefull of his Children to correct them, when he lets ſtrangers alone. It is a ſigne of love when he is at this coſt with us. And it ſhould tie us to be carefull of our behaviour, not to preſume upon Gods indulgence, for the nearer we are to him, the more carefull he is over us, *he will be ſanctified in all that come near him.* We ſee the *Corinthians*, becauſe they came unreverently to the Lords Table (though otherwiſe they were holy men) *ſome of them are ſick, ſome weake, others ſleep, that they might not be condemned with the world.*

Levit. 10. 3.

1 Cor. 11.

Let none therefore thinke the profeſſion of Religion to imply an immunity, but rather a ſtraiter bond; for *Judgement begins at the houſe of God*; whatſoever he ſuffers abroad, he will not ſuffer diſorders in his own houſe, as the Prophet ſayes, *You onely have I known of all the families of the earth, therefore you ſhall not goe unpuniſhed.* The Church is neare him, his Spouſe whom he loveth, and therefore he will correct her, not enduring any abatement, or decay of the firſt love in her. And for this very cauſe he threatneth the Church of *Epheſus, to remove her candleſticke.*

Amo. 3. 2.

Revel. 1.

To proceed, the poore Church here is not diſcouraged, but diſcovers and empties her ſelf to the *Daughters of Ieruſalem*, as it is the nature of Culinary fire, not onely to mount upwards, but alſo to bewray it ſelfe by light and heat: ſo of this heavenly fire, when it is once kindled from above, not onely to aſpire in its motion, but to diſcover

*Simile.*

diſcover it ſelf in affecting others with its qualities, it could not containe it ſelfe here in the Church, but that ſhe muſt goe to the *Daughters of Ieruſalem, I charge you O Daughters of Ieruſalem, if ye finde my Beloved, that ye tell him I am ſicke of love.* Therefore they mayd oubt that they have not this heavenly fire kindled in them, that expreſſe it not ſeriouſly, for of all affections it will not be concealed. David wonders at his owne love, *O how I love thy Law, oh how amiable are thy Tabernacles!* Pſal. 119.

Againe we ſee here, *That where the ſoule is ſicke of love, it ſtands not upon any tearmes, but it humbleth and abaſeth it ſelfe.* Wee ſay that affection ſtands not with Majeſty, therefore Chriſts love to us, moved him to abaſe himſelfe in taking our nature that he might be one with us, love ſtood not upon tearmes of greatneſſe; Wee ſee the mhurch goes to thoſe that were meaner proficients in Religion then her ſelfe, to powre out her Spirit to them, *to the Daughters of Ieruſalem*, ſhe abaſeth her ſelfe to any ſervice, love endureth all things, any thing to attain to the thing loved; as we ſee *Hamor* the ſonne of *Sichem*, he would endure painfull circumciſion for the love he bore to *Dinah*. So *Acts* 5. 41. It is ſaid they went away rejoycing after they were whipped, becauſe they loved Chriſt. The ſpirit of love made them rejoyce when they were moſt diſgracefully uſed.

*A Love-ſicke ſoule ſtands not upon termes.*

1 Theſ. 2. 3. 1 Cor. 13.

Gen. 34. 24.

Acts 6.

Sometimes where this affection of heavenly love is prevalent, ſo that a man is ſicke of it, the diſtempers thereof redounds to the body and reflects upon that, as wee ſee in *David*, *Pſal.* 32. 4. *That his moyſture became as the drought of ſummer*; becauſe

*That this ſickneſſe of divine love works alſo upon the body.*

Pſal. 32. 3.

XIII. RES

becauſe there is a marriage and a ſympathie betweene the ſoule and the body, wherein the exceſſive affections of the one redound and reflect upon the other.

*Tell him that I am ſicke of love*; here is a ſickneſſe, but not unto death, but unto life, a ſickneſſe that never ends but in comfort and ſatisfaction, Bleſſed are thoſe that hunger and thirſt after Chriſt, they ſhall be ſatisfied, as we ſhall ſee afterwards more at large.

Mat. 5. 6.

Knowledge gives not the denomination, *for we may know ill and be good, and we may know good and be evill*; but it is the affection of the ſoule, which cleaves to the things known, the truth of our love is that gives the denomination of a ſtate to be good or ill; love is the weight and wing of the ſoule, which carries it where it goes, which if it carry us to earth, we are baſe and earthly, if to heaven, heavenly; we ſhould have eſpeciall care how we fix this affection; for thereafter as it is, even ſo is our condition: *Aske thy love of what city thou art, whether of Ieruſalem or of Babylon* (as *Auſtin* ſaith) Now the daughters of Jeruſalem reply unto the Church, wondring at her earneſtneſſe, *What is thy Beloved more then another beloved, O thou faireſt among women? what is thy beloved more then another beloved, that thou doeſt ſo charge us?*

*It is not our knowledge that makes us good or evill, but goodneſſe loved, and cleaven to, makes us to be ſo.*

In ſtead of giving ſatisfaction to her, they reply with asking new Queſtions, *What is thy Beloved more than another beloved, O thou faireſt among women? what is thy beloved*, &c. Wherin ye have a doubling of the Queſtion, to ſhew the ſerioufneſſe of it, of this their anſwer there are two parts:

1. *A loving and ſweet Compellation, O thou faireſt among women.*

2. *The Queſtion doubled, what is thy beloved more than another Beloved.* And *again, What is thy Beloved,* &c. that thou doſt ſo charge us? *as* if they ſhould ſay, *Thou layeſt a ſerious charge upon us, therefore there is ſome great matter ſurely in thy Beloved, that thou makeſt ſuch inquiry after him.* Thus the weaker Chriſtians being ſtirred up by the example of the ſtronger, they make this Queſtion, and are thus inquiſitive, it but to ſpeake of them in their order.

*O thou faireſt among women,* here is the compellation, the Church is the faireſt among women in the judgement of Chriſt, ſo he cals her, *Can.* 1. 8. *O thou faireſt among women*; and here the fellow members of the Church tearme her ſo too, *faire* and the *faireſt*, incomparable *faire.*

*Queſt.* *But how cometh ſhe to be thus faire?*

*Anſw.* 1. *It is in regard that ſhe is clothed with Chriſts robes.* *Rev.* 12. there is a woman mentioned, cloathed with the Sun: We were all innobled with the image of God at the firſt; but after we had ſinned, we were bereſt of that Image; therefore now all our beauty muſt be cloathing, which is not naturall to man, but artificiall, fetched from other things, our beauty now is borrowed, it is not connaturall with us, the beauty of the Church now comes from the head of the Church Chriſt, ſhe ſhines in the beames of her husband; not onely in Juſtification, but in ſanctification alſo.

*The Church is faire in regard ſhe is clothed with Chriſt.*

2. *In regard of the graces ſhe hath from Chriſt ſhe ſhines.*

*The Church is lovely and faire againe, as from Chriſts imputative righteouſneſſe, ſo from his righteouſneſſe*

SER. XIII.

*ouſneſſe inherent in her, the graces ſhe hath from him*; for of him we receive Grace for Grace, there is never a Grace but it is beautifull and faire; for what is Grace but the beames of Chriſt the Sun of Righteouſneſſe? ſo that all muſt be faire that comes from the firſt faire, all beautifull that comes from the firſt beauty.

This beauty of Grace, whereby it makes the Church ſo faire, ſprings from theſe grounds.

1. Firſt, *In that it is from a divine principle and originall, it is not baſely bred, but from Heaven*, and therefore it raiſeth the ſoule above nature, and makes the ſubjects, wherein it is, as farre ſurpaſſe all other men as men doe beaſts.

2. Secondly, In regard of the continuance, it is everlaſting and makes us continue for ever. *All* Iſa. 40. 6. *fleſh is graſſe, and as the flower of graſſe* (ſaith the Prophet) and it is repeated in the New Teſtament in divers places. All worldly excellency is as the flower of graſſe, *The graſſe withereth,* 1 Pet. 1. 24. *and the flower fadeth, but the word of the Lord* (that is, the grace that is imprinted in the ſoule by the Spirit with the word) *that abideth for ever*, and makes us abide like wiſe.

*Vſe.* From this faireneſſe of the Church, let us take occaſion to contemplate of the excellency of Chriſt that puts this luſtre of beauty upon the Church. *Moſes* married a woman that was not beautifull, but could not alter the complection and condition of his Spouſe. But Chriſt doth, he takes us wallowing in our bloud, deformed and defiled, hee is ſuch a husband as can put his Church into his owne diſpoſition, and transforme her

*That Chriſt is the moſt excellent husband.*

her into his owne proportion. He is ſuch a *Head* as can quicken his members, ſuch a root as inſtils life unto all his branches! ſuch a foundation as makes us living ſtones, there is a vertue and power in this husband above all.

*Queſt* *But ſhe is blacke?*

*Anſw.* 1. She is ſo indeed, and ſhe confeſſeth her ſelfe to be ſo, *Cant.* 1.5. I am black but comely, black in regard of the afflictions and perſecutions of others ſhe meets with in this world.

*In what regard the Church cals her ſelf black.*

2. Blacke againe, *In regard of ſcandals*, for the Devill hates the Church more than all ſocieties in the world; therefore in the ſociety of the Church there are often more ſcandals than in other people, as the Apoſtle tels the *Corinthians* there was inceſt among them, the like was not among the Heathen.

3. She is black *through the envy of the world, that looks more at the Churches faults then vertues.*

1 Cor. 5.

*How the Churches ſtate in this life comes to be ſo full of ſcandals.*

*The Church is blacke and unlovely, nothing differing from others*, In regard of Gods outward dealing, *All fals alike to all*, they are ſicke and deformed, they have all things outwardly whatſoever is common with others.

4. Eccl. 6.2.

5. Laſtly and principally ſhe is blacke, *in reſpect of her infirmities and weakneſſes*, ſubject to weakneſſe and paſſions as other men; the beauty of the Church is inward and undiſcerned to the carnall eye altogether: the *Scribes* and *Phariſes ſee* no vertue in Chriſt himſelfe. It is ſaid, *that he came among his own, and his own could not diſcerne him, the darkneſſe could not comprehend that light.* Now as it was with Chriſt, ſo it is much more with the Church, let this then be the uſe of it.

Joh. 1.11.

SER. XIII.

*Vſe* 1. *Oppoſe Judgement to Judgement.*

*Oppoſe the ſtate of the Church to the falſe judgement of the world:* they ſee all blacke, and nothing elſe that is good; Chriſt ſees that which is blacke too; but then his Spirit in them (together with the ſight of their blackneſſe) ſeeth their beauty too. *I am blacke, but comely*, &c Be not diſcouraged therefore at the cenſure of the world, blinde men cannot judge of colours It is ſaid of Chriſt, *the had no forme or beauty in him when we ſhall ſee him.* Iſa. 53.

1. Not in outward glory, nor in the view of the world. If wee be therefore thought to be black, we are no otherwiſe thought of, then the Church and Chriſt hath been before us.

*Vſe* 3. *To remember Chriſt, judgement of the Church when we are under temptations.*

Againe let us make this Uſe of it, *againſt Satan in the time of temptation*, Doth Chriſt thinke us faire for the good we have? doth he not altogether value us by our ill? and ſhall we beleeve Satan, who joynes with the diſtempers of melancholy, or weakneſſe we are in, which he uſeth as a weapon againſt the ſoule, to make us thinke otherwiſe? *Satan is not onely a murtherer, but a lyar from the beginning.* We muſt not beleeve an enemy, and a lyar withall. But conſider how Chriſt and the Church judgeth, that have better diſcerning. *And let us beware we be not Satans to our ſelves:* For if there were no Devill, yet in the time of temptation and deſertion we are ſubject to diſcouragement, to give falſe witneſſe againſt our ſelves, we are apt to look on the darke ſide of the Cloud. Exod. 14. 20 The Cloud that went before the *Iſraelites* had a double aſpect, one dark, the other light; in temptation we look on the darke ſide of the ſoul, and are witty in pleading againſt our ſelves. O but conſider what

what Chriſt judgeth of us, *O thou faireſt among women*, and what thoſe about us that are learned, who can read our Evidences better then we our ſelves, or judge of us, let us truſt the judgement of others in time of temptation more than our owne. SER. XIII. *Simile.*

Learne againe here, *What to judge of the Spirits of ſuch kind of men, as are all in diſgracing & defacing the poore Church*; their table talke is of the infirmities of Chriſtians, they light upon them as flies doe upon ſore places, and will ſee nothing that is good in them. O where is the Spirit of Chriſt, or of the Church of Chriſt in them that thus beſcratch the face of the Church? when yet (oft-times) their hearts tell them theſe poore deſpiſed ones will be better than themſelves one day, for grace ſhall have the upper hand of all excellencies. *Vſe 5. To ſee the bitterneſſe of their ſpirits that ſee or will ſee no good in Gods children.* *Simile.*

The Church is *faire* and *faireſt*: Grace is a tranſcendent good, all the excellency of civility and morality is nothing to this, this denominates *the Church the faireſt*, ſhe is not gilt, but pure gold; not painted, but hath a true naturall complexion, all other excellencies are but gilt, painted excellencies. *The whore of Babylon* ſhe is wondrous faire. But wherein doth her beauty conſiſt? In ornaments and ceremonies to abuſe ſilly people, that goe no further then fancy, it is an excellency that comes not to the judgement, but the excellency of the Church is otherwiſe, ſhe is *The faireſt among women*, ſhe hath a naturall fairneſſe; as gold is pure gold, ſo the Church is of a pure compoſition, glorious within. It is for the falſe whoriſh Church to be glorious without *That all other excellencies have Grace, are but painted excellencies.*

SER. XIII. *Obſerv.*

onely, but the true Church is glorious within: But that which we would eſpecially obſerve, is, *that we ſhould labour to anſwer this commendation, not onely to be faire, but the faireſt, to be tranſcendently ſingularly good, to doe ſomewhat more than others can, to have ſomewhat more in us than others have.*

*That this ſtrife for eminency in grace is ſutable to a Chriſtians calling.*

For it is anſwerable to the ſtate of a Chriſtian, Is a Chriſtian in an excellent ranke above other men? let him ſhew it by a carriage more gracious, more fruitfull and plentifull in good works. There is a kind of excellency affected in other things, much more ſhould we deſire to be excellent in that which is good, that we may not be *faire* onely but the *faireſt*. This the Apoſtle Saint *Paul* excellently preſſeth to *Titus* his Scholar, *Tit.* 2.14 and to all of us in other places, that we ſhould be *A peculiar people, Zealous of good works*; not onely to doe them, but to be zealous of them, and to goe before others in them, ſtanding as ſtander-bearers.

*That it is a ſinfull ſluggiſh feare to feare to be religious.*

Therefore thoſe that thinke they may goe too farre in Religion, that they may be too fruitfull, are not worthy the name of the Spouſe of Chriſt, for ſhe is faire, yea the faireſt among women: *The righteous is more excellent than his neighbour*; therefore we ſhould excell in good works (as the Apoſtle exhorts us) *to labour after things that are excellent*, as if he ſhould ſay, is there any thing better than other? labour for that. You have ſome ſo far from this diſpoſition, that they cry down the excellencies of others, leſt the fairneſſe of others might diſcover their blackneſſe. Thus wee leave the *Compellation* and come to the *Queſtion*.

1 Cor. 12. 32
2 Pet. 1. 8.

*Queſt.* *What is thy Beloved more than another Beloved?*

and

SER. XIII.

and they double it, *What is thy Beloved more than another Beloved, that thou ſo chargeſt us?*

Queſtions are of divers natures; we ſhall not ſtand upon them, this is not a *Queſtion* meerely of ignorance (for they had ſome knowledge of Chriſt, though weak) Nor was it a curious nor a catching Queſtion, like thoſe of the *Scribes* and *Phariſees* unto Chriſt: To inſtance in that of *Pilate, What is truth?* when Chriſt had told him the *truth, What is truth* (ſaith he) in a ſcornfull prophane manner, as indeed prophane ſpirits cannot heare ſavoury words, but they turn them off with ſcorn, What is truth? This here in the Text is not ſuch, but a Queſtion tending to further reſolution and ſatisfaction, *What is thy Beloved more than another beloved?* Joh. 18. 38.

Firſt of all obſerve, that theſe of the Church here were ſtirred up by the examples of other members of the Church to be inquiſitive after Chriſt, ſo to be ſatisfied. Hence obſerve, *That there is a wondrous force in the examples of Chriſtians to ſtirre up one another.* We ſee here when the Church was *ſick of love*, the other part of the members began to thinke what is the reaſon the Church is ſo earneſt to ſeek after Chriſt, there is ſome excellency ſure in him; for *wiſe men doe not uſe great motions in little matters; great things are carried with great movings;* we uſe not to ſtirre up tragedies for trifles, to make mountains of molehils; the endeavours & carriages of great perſons that be wiſe, judicious & holy, are anſwerable to the nature of things. And indeed the Church judgeth aright in this, then ſee the force of good exemple, any man that hath his wits about *Obſerv.*

SER. XIII.

him, when he ſees other ſerious, earneſt and carefull about a thing whereof for the preſent he can ſee no reaſon (eſpecially if they have parts equall or ſuperiour to himſelf) will reaſon thus preſently.

*A reaſoning upon others earneſtneſſe.*

*What is the matter that ſuch an one is ſo earneſt, ſo carefull, watchfull laborious, inquiſitive? Is it not for want of wit? ſurely he hath parts enough, he underſtands himſelf well.* And then he begins to think, *ſure I am too cold,* hereupon comes competition and corrivalitie, *ſurely I will be as good as he.*

*Vſe.*

*To be exemplary for good to others.*

Let us labour therefore to be exemplary to others, and to expreſſe the graces of God; for thus we ſhall do more then we are aware, there is a ſecret influence in good example, though a man ſay nothing (ſaith one) there is a way to profit from a good man though he hold his peace, his courſe of life ſpeaks loud enough, we owe this to all, even to them that are without, to doe them ſo much good as to give them a good example, & we wrong them when we do not, and hinder their coming on by an evill, or a dead example.

*A debt to theſe that are without.*

*That anſwerable to the good we ſhall doe to others, ſhall be our comfort in life and death.*

Let this be one motive to ſtirre us up to it, *That anſwerable to the good we ſhould do in this kind ſhall be our comfort in life and death, and our reward after death.* For the more ſpreading our good is, either in word, life, or converſation, the more our conſciences ſhall be ſetled in the conſideration of a good life well ſpent, our reward ſhall be anſwerable to our communication & diffuſion of good; & whereas otherwiſe it will lie heavy on the conſcience, not only in this life, but at the day of judgement, & after, when we ſhall think not onely of the perſonall ill that we ſtand guilty of, but exemplary ill alſo.

SER. XIII.

*That we ſhall not onely anſwer for our knowledg, but alſo for all the good examples and helps we have had and neglected.*

*It ſhould move thoſe therefore of inferior ſort to look to all good examples.* as the Church here to the love of the other part of the Church. Wherefore are examples among us, but that we ſhould follow them? we ſhall not onely be anſwerable for abuſe of knowledge, but alſo of good examples we have had and neglected. Doth God kindle lights for us, and ſhall we not walk by their light? It is a ſin not to conſider the *Sun*, the *Moon*, the *Stars*, the *Heavens*, and works of *Nature* and *Providence*, much more not to conſider the *Works of Grace*. But one place of Scripture ſhall cloſe up all, which is, *Rom.* 11. 11. That the example of us *Gentiles* at length ſhall ſtirre up and provoke the Jews to beleeve. To thoſe ſtiffe-necked Jews example ſhall be ſo forcible, that it ſhall prevaile with them to beleeve and to be converted. If example be of ſuch force as to convert the Jews that are ſo far off, how much more is it or ſhould it be to convert Chriſtians? wondrous is the force of good example. So we come to the Queſtion it ſelfe.

*Simile.*

*What is thy beloved more than another beloved*, &c.

We ſee there is excellent uſe of holy conference, the Church coming to the *daughters of Jeruſalem*, ſpeaking of Chriſt her beloved, that ſhe is *ſick of love*, &c. *The daughters of Jeruſalem* are inquiſitive to know Chriſt more and more. Here is the benefit of holy conference and good ſpeeches, one thing draws on another, and that draws on another, till at length the ſoule be warmed and kindled with the conſideration and meditation of heavenly things. That that is litle

SER. XIII.

*That in dealing and speaking of heavenly things a little thing is the beginning of great matters*

in the beginning may bring forth great matters. This question to the Church, and talking with her, *I charge you if you finde my beloved, to tell him that I am sicke of love*, breeds Questions in others, *what is thy beloved*, &c. Whence upon the description of her Beloved, her heart is kindled, she findeth her Beloved: So that talking of holy and heavenly things is good for others, and our selves also. *It is good for others*, as it was good for the *daughters of Ierusalem* here, for thereupon they are stirred up to be inquisitive after Christ; and it was good for the Church her selfe, for hereupon she took occasion to make a large commendation of Christ, wherein she found much comfort.

*That holy conference is good for others and our selves.*

2. *Good conference then is good for our selves*; for we see a little seed brings forth at length a great tree, a little fire kindleth much fewell, and great things many times rise out of small despised beginnings. It was a little occasion which *Naaman* the *Assyrian* had to effect his conversion. There was a poore banished woman, a stranger, who was a Jewish maid-servant, she told her Lords servants that there was a prophet in Jury that could heal him: whereupon he came thither, and was converted and healed. And *Paul* sheweth, that the very *report of his bands* did a great deal of good in *Cesars* house. Report and fame is a little matter, but little matters make way for the greater.

2 King. 5.

Phil. 1.

*Exhortation to fruitfull conference.*

*This may put us in minde to spend our time fruitfully in good conference, when in discretion it is seasonable*: we know not when we begin, where we may make an end; our soules may be carried up to

to Heaven before we are aware; for the Spirit will inlarge it ſelfe from one thing to another, *To him that hath ſhall be given more and more ſtill*: God graciouſly ſeconds good beginnings. We ſee the poore Diſciples, when they were in a damp for the loſſe of Chriſt, after he comes, meets them, and talks of holy things. In that very conference, *their hearts were warmed and kindled*: For, next to Heaven it ſelf, our meeting together here, it is a kinde of Paradiſe; the greateſt pleaſure in the world is, to meet with thoſe here, whom we ſhall ever live with in Heaven. Thoſe who are good ſhould not ſpend ſuch opportunities fruitleſly.

Mat. 23.

Luke 24. 31.

And to this end, labour for the graces of the *Communion of Saints*; for there is ſuch a ſtate, we beleeve it as an *Article of our Creed*. How ſhall we approve our ſelves to be ſuch as have intereſt unto the communion of Saints, unleſſe we have ſpirits able to communicate good to others; pittifull and loving ſpirits, that we may ſpeake a word in due ſeaſon?

*That graces ſuiting the communion of Saints is a great help to conference.*

What a world of precious time is ſpent in idle converſing, as if the time were a burthen, and no improvement to be made of the good parts of others? ſometimes though we know that which we aske of others as well as they doe; yet notwithſtanding good ſpeeches will draw us to know it better, by giving occaſion to ſpeake more of it, wherewith the Spirit works more effectuall and imprints it deeper: ſo that it ſhall be a more rooted knowledge than before. For that *doth good that is graciouſly knowne, and that is graciouſly knowne that the Spirit ſeales upon our ſoules.*

Perhaps

SER. XIII.

Perhaps the knowledge I have is not yet ſealed ſufficiently, it is not rooted by conference, though I heare the ſame things againe, yet I may heare them in a freſh manner, and ſo I may have it ſealed deeper then before, experience findes theſe things to be true.

*That Chriſtians ſhould be inquiſitive.*

Againe, *We ſhould labour here to have our hearts inquiſitive.* The heathen man accounted it a grace in his ſchollar, and a ſigne that he would prove hopefull, *becauſe he was full of Queſtions.* Chriſtians ſhould be inquiſitive *of the wayes of Righteouſneſſe*; Inquiſitive of the right path which leads to Heaven, how to carry themſelves in private in their families, how in all eſtates, inquiſitive of the excellency of Chriſt: *What is thy Beloved more than another beloved? Queſtions end uſually in reſolutions*; for the ſoule will not reſt but in ſatisfaction. Reſt is the happineſſe of the ſoule as it were, when a Queſtion is moved it will be not be quiet till it have ſatisfaction; therefore *doubting at the firſt, breeds reſolution at the laſt.* It is good therefore to raiſe Queſtions of the practiſe of all neceſſary points, and to improve the good parts and gifts of others that we converſe with, to give ſatisfaction. What an excellent improvement is this of communion and Company, when no thing troubles our ſpirit, but we may have ſatisfaction from others upon our propoſing it. Perhaps God hath laid up in the parts of others ſatisfaction to our ſoules, and hath ſo determined that we ſhall be perplexed and vexed with ſcruples, till we have recourſe to ſome whom he hath appointed to be helpfull to us in this kind. Many

goe

goe mourning a great part of their daies in a kinde of ſullenneſſe this way, becauſe that they do not open their eſtate to others. You ſee here the contrary practiſe of the Church, ſhe doubles the Queſtion, *What is thy beloved more than another beloved, O thou faireſt among women? what is thy beloved more than another beloved, that thou doſt ſo charge us?*

## The fourteenth Sermon.

### Cant. V. IX. X.

*What is thy beloved more then another beloved, O thou faireſt among women? what is thy beloved more than another beloved, that thou deeſt ſo charge us?*
*My beloved is white and ruddy, the chiefeſt among ten thouſand.*

THe laſt time we met, we left the Church *ſick of love:* which ſtrange affection in her, together with her paſſionate charge to the *daughters of Jeruſalem*, moved them to make this Queſtion unto her, *What is thy beloved more then another beloved*, &c. To be in love is much; to conceale it is grievous; to vent it with ſuch fervency & paſſion breeds aſtoniſhment in theſe younger Chriſtians, who wonder what that is which can ſo draw away the Churches love, and run away with her affections. They knew no ſuch

SER. XIV.

ſuch excellencies of the perſon the Church ſo admired, and therefore they double the Queſtion unto her, *What is thy beloved*, &c. *what is thy beloved*, &c. Whereby we ſee the excellency of the ſoule which aſpires ſtill towards perfection, not reſting in any ſtate inferior to the moſt excellent: Therefore alſo is the Churches ſickneſſe of love here, who deſires a nearer union and communion with Chriſt than ſhe at this time had.

For there are degrees of ſpirituall languiſhing, *till we be in Heaven we are alway under ſome degree of this ſickneſſe of love*; though the ſoule have more communion at one time than at another. Yea the Angels are under this wiſh, to ſee Chriſt together with his Church in full perfection: ſo that untill we be in Heaven, where ſhall be a perfect re-union of ſoule and body, and of all the members of the Church together, there is a kind of *ſickneſſe* attending upon the Church, and a languiſhing.

The Queſtion asked is,

*What is thy beloved more than anothers beloved, O thou faireſt among women?*

What! now *faire* when her *vaile* was taken away? now *faire* when the *Watchmen* abaſed her? now *faire* when ſhe was diſgraced? Yes, now *faire* and now *faire*, in the ſight of the *daughters of Ieruſalem*, and in the ſight of Chriſt that cals her *the faireſt among women*: So that under all diſgraces, infirmities and ſcandals, under all the ſhame that riſeth in the ſoul upon ſinne, under all theſe clouds there is an excellency of the Church, ſhe is *The faireſt among women*, notwithſtanding all theſe: *O thou faireſt among women.*

*Whence*

SER. XIV.

*Queſt.* *Whence comes this fairneſſe under ſuch ſeeming foulenеſſe and diſgrace?*

*Anſw.* It comes from without, it is borrowed beauty, as you have it, *Ezek.* 16. 1, 2. By nature we lie in our bloud, there muſt be a beauty put upon us, we are faire with the beauty that wee have out of Chriſts wardrobe. The Church ſhines in the beams of Chriſts righteouſneſſe, ſhe is not borne thus faire, but new borne fairer. The Church of Chriſt is all-glorious, but it is within, not ſeen of the world, ſhe hath a life, but it is a hidden life, *Our glory & our life is hidden in Chriſt*: It is hid ſometimes from the Church it ſelfe, who ſees onely her deformity and not her beauty; her death, but not her life, becauſe *her life is hid.* Here is a myſtery of Religion, *The Church is never more faire than when ſhe judgeth her ſelfe to be moſt deformed; Never more happy than when ſhe judgeth her ſelf to be miſerable; Never more ſtrong than when ſhe feels her ſelfe to be weake; Never more righteous than when ſhe feeles her ſelfe to be moſt burthened with the guilt of her own ſins*: becauſe the ſenſe of one contrary forceth to another; the ſenſe of ill forceth us to the fountaine of good, to have ſupply thence, *When I am weake, then am I ſtrong* (ſaith *Paul*) Grace and ſtrength is perfect in weakneſſe.

*That Grace only makes us lovely to Chriſt.* Pſal. 45. Col. 3.

*That the Church is never more faire in Chriſts eye, but when ſhe ſees and complains moſt of her deformities.* 2 Cor. 12.

*That the ſenſe of one contrary forceth another.* 2 Cor. 12. 16.

*Vſe.* This ſhould teach us what to judge of the Church & people of God, even under their ſeeming diſgraces, yet to judge of them as the excellenteſt people in the world, *Pſal.* 16. *All my delight is in thoſe that are excellent*, to joyne our ſelves to them; Eſpecially this is here to be underſtood of the Church as it is the myſticall body of

*What to judge of the Church and Gods people under ſeeming diſgraces.*

SER. XIV. Heb 12 22.

of Chriſt, not as a mixed body, as a viſible Church, *but as it is the Temple of the Holy-Ghoſt.*

*Simile.*

The *viſible Church* hath termes of excellency put upon it ſometimes, but it is in regard of the better part. As gold unrefined is called gold, becauſe gold is the better part: And a heap of wheat unwinnowed is called wheat, though there be much chaffe in it: the body of Chriſt it ſelfe hath alwaies excellent termes given it, *O thou faireſt among women.*

*That the cauſe why wicked men ſee not this beauty, is becauſe they looke on God through the ſpectacles of malice.* Job 1.

Thoſe that looke upon the Church with the ſpectacles of malice can ſee no ſuch beauty in her, though to eſpy our faults, as the Devill could in *Iob*, to quarrell, to ſlander, they are quick-ſighted enough; but we ſee here the Church in the judgement of the *daughters of Ieruſalem*, that ſhe is the *faireſt among women.*

The *Papiſts* have a painted beauty for their Catholique Church, but here is no ſuch beauty. It becomes a whore to be painted, to be as faire as her hands can make her, with feigned beauty. But the Church of Chriſt hath a beauty from her husband, a reall ſpirituall beauty not diſcerned of the world.

*Vſe.*

*That Chriſtians in the upbraidings of conſcience ſhould look upon the good as on the ill in them.*

This ſhould be of uſe to Gods Children themſelves, *to helpe them in the upbraidings of conſcience* (as if they had no goodneſſe in them) *becauſe they have a great deale of ill.* Chriſtians ſhould have a double eye, one to ſet and fixe upon that which is ill in them, to humble them, and another upon that which is ſupernaturally gracious in them, to encourage themſelves: They ſhould looke upon themſelves as Chriſt lookes upon them, and judge of themſelves as he judgeth of them by the

the better part. He lookes not ſo much what ill we have; for, *that ſhall be wrought out by little and little, and aboliſhed, it is condemned already, and it ſhall be executed by little & little til it be wholly aboliſhed:* But he looks upon us in regard of the better part, ſo ſhould we looke upon our ſelves, though other whiles upon our blacke feet (our infirmities) when we are tempted to pride and haughtineſſe; but alwaies let the mean thoughts wee conceive of our ſelves, make us to flie to Chriſt.

*That we ſhould look upon our ſelves as Chriſt looks upon us.*

*What is thy Beloved more than another Beloved?*

Here is a Queſtion, and a Queſtion anſwered with a Queſtion: Queſtions they breed knowledge, (as the Greek Proverb is) *Doubtings breed reſolution.* Whereupon the inquiſitive ſoule uſually proves the moſt learned, judicious and wiſe ſoule; therefore that great Philoſopher counted it as a vertue amongſt his Scholars, that they would be inquiſitive: So the Scholars of Righteouſneſſe are inquiſitive, *they enquire the way to Canaan, and the way to Zion with their faces thitherwards.* Jer. 50.

It is a ſpeciall part of Chriſtian wiſedome to improve the excellency of others by Queſtions, to have a Bucket to draw out of the deep Wels of others (as *Salomon* ſaith) *The heart of a wiſe man is as deep waters, but a man of underſtanding can tell how to fetch thoſe waters out.* There be many men of deep and excellent parts which are loſt in the world, becauſe men know not how to improve them; therfore it is good while we have men excellent in any kind, to make uſe of them. It is an honour to God as well as a commodity to our ſelves. Doth God ſuffer lights to ſhine in the world, that

*That is a ſpeciall point of wiſdom to improve the gifts of others by queſtions.*

Ser. XIV.

that we ſhould take no notice of them? It is a wrong to our ſelves, and a diſhonour to God.

What *is thy Beloved more than another Beloved*, &c.

*Obſerv.*

A further point from hence is, *That if we would give encouragement to others to repaire to us for any good, we ſhould labour to be ſo excellent as to adorne Religion.*

*O thou faireſt among women, what is thy Beloved*, &c. They enquire of her becauſe they have a good conceit of her: a world of good might be done, if there were bred a good conceit of men in others; we ſay in ſicknes, *a good conceit of the Phyſitian is halfe the cure*: ſo in teaching, a good conceit of the teacher is half the learning: *The Daughters of Ieruſalem* had a good conceit here in the queſtioning of the Church, *O thou faireſt among women, what is thy beloved more then another beloved?*

*That our endeavours muſt be to make Religion lovely.*

Let us labour therefore to be ſuch as may bring honour and credit to Religion, and make it lovely, that what we doe may make others thinke we doe what we doe to great purpoſe, which is oft times a ſpeciall meanes and occaſion of their converſion: Though properly the cauſe of converſion be the Spirit of God in the ordinances; yet the inducement (many times) and occaſion, is the obſervation of the courſe and carriage of thoſe thatt excell and are known to be eminent in parts and in graces, *Emulation adds ſpurs to the ſoule*. Doe they take ſuch courſes that are wiſer then I, and ſhall not I take the like courſe too? *Paul* ſaith, the emulation of the *Gentiles* ſhall be a meanes of the converſion of the *Iews*, when they

Rom. 11. 11.

they ſhall ſee them imbrace Chriſt, they will be encouraged to do ſo alſo, what ſhall we thinke therefore of them that live ſo as that they bring an evill report, ſcandall and reproach upon Religion? Great and fearfull is their wickedneſſe, that by their ill converſation like *Hophni* and *Phinehas* diſcredit the ordinances of the Lord. 1 Sam. 2. 17.

Now the Church thus anſwers the former Queſtion touching Chriſt, *My beloved is white and ruddy, the chiefeſt of ten thouſand* She is not afraid to ſet out her Beloveds beauty; for *there is no envy in ſpirituall things*: It is want of wiſdom amongſt men to commend a thing that is very lovely to others, and ſo to ſet an edge upon their affections, when they cannot both ſhare, and the more one hath, the leſſe another hath of all things here below: But in ſpirituall things there is no envy at the ſharing of others in that we love our ſelves, becauſe all may be loved alike: Chriſt hath grace and affection enough for all his; he hath not (as *Eſau* ſpeaks) *but one bleſſing*: No, he can make all his happy. Therefore the Church ſtands not upon tearmes, when the *daughters of Jeruſalem* enquire about her *Beloved*, I tell you freely ſayes ſhe what my *Beloved* is: Firſt in generall the anſwer is, *My Beloved is white and ruddy, the chiefeſt among ten thouſand*; then afterwards there is a ſpecification of the particulars, ſhe will not ſtand upon the groſſe, but admires at every parcell in the thing beloved, every thing is lovely; as we ſhall ſee in particular afterwards. *That there is no rivality in ſpirituall things, where is abundance for all of love.*

*My Beloved is white and ruddy, the chiefeſt among ten thouſand.*

SER. XIV.

We will take that which is ſafe, becauſe we will have ſure footing (as near as we can) in this myſticall portion of Scripture. What is that *white and ruddy? why doth the Church ſet forth the ſpirituall excellencies of Chriſt by that which is moſt excellent and moſt beautifull?*

*Queſt.*

*Anſw.*

Becauſe of all complexions the mixed complexion of theſe two colours, *white and ruddy*, is the pureſt and the beſt, therefore ſhe ſets out the beauty and the Spirituall excellency of Chriſt by this *white* and *ruddy*, beauty ariſeth of the mixture of theſe two. Firſt ſhe ſets out the beauty of Chriſt poſitively, and then by way of compariſon. *The chiefeſt among ten thouſand.*

*What beauty is, and wherein it conſiſteth.*

But what is this *white* and *ruddy?* what is beauty?

1.

*Proportion and feature.*

To the making up of beauty there is required a ſound healthy conſtitution, ſo as the particulars have a due proportion, there muſt be a harmony of the parts, one ſuiting with another; for *comelineſſe ſtands in oneneſſe*, when many things (as it were) are one. *Vncomelineſſe is in diverſity*, when divers things are jumbled together that belong to many heads: as we ſay it is uncomely to have an old mans head on a young mans ſhoulders; but when all things are ſo ſuited that they make one agreeing exactly, there is beauty and comelineſſe.

2.

*In the grace of colour.*

Beſides ſoundneſſe of conſtitution and comelineſſe of proportion *there is a grace of colour* that maketh beauty, which ariſeth out of the other, ſo that *ſoundneſſe and goodneſſe of conſtitution, together with the exact proportion of the variety of parts, having with it this gracefulneſſe of colour and complexion*

*plexion, makes up that which we call beauty.* In a word then, this carnation colour, *white* and *ruddy*, may be understood of that excellent and sweet mixture that makes such a grace fulnesse in Christ, in him there is wonderfull purity and holinesse, and yet *a wonderfull weaknesse*, there is God, *the great God*, and *a peice of earth*, of flesh, in one person, *a bloudy pierced*, and *a glorious shining body*, *humility* and *glory*: Justice, wonderfull justice, and yet exceeding love and mercy; Justice to his enemies, Mercy to his Children.

*The strange and admirable mixture in Christ.*

*Christ is a most beautifull Person.* *Observ.*

Not as God onely but as man, the Mediator God and man; the Person of the Mediator is a beautifull Person; as *Psal.* 45. there is a notable description of Christ, and of his Church, *Thou art fairer then the children of men, grace is poured into thy lips*, &c.

*In what regard Christ was most beautifull.*

But *the loveliness and beauty of Christ is especially spirituall*, in regard of the graces of his Spirit. A deformed person, man or woman, of a homely complexion and constitution, yet notwithstanding when we descerne them by their conversation to be very wise, and of a lovely and sweet spirit, very able, and withall wondrous willing to impart their abilities, being wondrous usefull, what a world of love doth it breed, though wee see in their outward man nothing lovely? The consideration of what *sufficiency* is in Christ, *wisdom, power, goodnesse*, and *love*, that made him come from Heaven to Earth, to take our nature upon him, to marry us and joyne our natures to his (that he might joyne us to him in spirituall bonds) the

*That the loveline and beauty of Christ must be spiritually considered.*

SER. XIV.

Mat. 19 22.

consideration of his *meekneſſe* and *gentleneſſe*, how he never turned any back againe that came to him, ſhould make us highly prize him: Indeed ſome went back of themſelves (as the young man in diſcontent) Chriſt turned them not back; nay he loved the appearance of goodneſſe in the young man, and embraced him. He is of ſo ſweet a nature, that he never upbraided thoſe that followed him with their former ſins; as *Peter* with denial, and the like. He is of ſo gracious a nature, that he tooke not notice of petty infirmities in his Diſciples, but tels them of the danger of thoſe ſins that might hurt them, being of ſo ſweet a nature,

Iſa. 42. that *he will not quench the ſmoaking flax, nor breake the bruiſed reed*, his whole life being nothing but a doing of good, *He did all things well* (as the Goſpell ſpeaks) excellent well.

Now the conſideration of what a gracious Spirit is in Chriſt, muſt needs be a loadſtone of love, and make him beautifull. Therefore *Bernard* ſaith well, *When I thinke of Chriſt, I thinke at once of God, full of majeſty and glory, & at the ſame time of Man, full of meekneſſe, gentleneſſe and ſweetneſſe.* So let us conſider of Chriſt as of the *Mighty God powerfull*; and withall conſider of him as a gentle and milde man, that came riding meekly

Mat. 21. on an Aſſe (as the Scripture ſets him out) He was for all commers, and gave entertainment to all,

Mat. 11. 28. *Come unto me all yee that are weary & heavy laden*, &c. For the moſt weake and miſerable perſon of all had the ſweeteſt entertainment of him, *He*

Luk 16. 10. *came to ſeeke and to ſave that which was loſt.* Let us I ſay thinke of him both as of the great God,

and

Serm. XIV.

Heb. 12.

and w.thall as of a meek Man; the one to eſtabliſh our ſoules, that he is able to doe great matters, the other to draw us to him becauſe he loves us. We are afraid to goe to God *a conſuming fire*, but now let us think we goe to bone of our bone, & fleſh of our fleſh, to our brother, to one that out of his goodneſſe abaſed himſelf of purpoſe that we might be one with him, who loved us more than his own life, and was contented to carry the curſe for us, that we might be bleſſed of God for ever, & to ſuffer a moſt painfull & ſhameful death, that ſo he might make us heirs of everlaſting life.

Simile.

Chriſt is ſpiritually lovely, *the chiefeſt of ten thouſand.* The Church ſets him out by compariſon, a *ſtandard-bearer*, a carrier of the *banner of ten thouſand*: For, as the goodlieſt men uſe to carry the Enſigne, the Banner, ſo he the goodlieſt of all other is the ſtandard-bearer.

Obſerv.

Pſal. 45. 7.

Whence we gather, *That Chriſt as he is beautifull and good, ſo he is incomparably beyond all compariſon good; He is a ſtandard-bearer, one among ten thouſand, anoynted with the oyle of gladneſſe above his fellows.*

*In regard of the perſonall union with the Godhead in our nature, Chriſt is the chief of all. In regard all our fulnes comes from Chriſt, he is the chief of all.*

Firſt, for that he is ſo near to God by the perſonall union.

And in regard likewiſe, *That all others have all from him; of his fulneſſe we receive grace for grace*; ours is but a derivative fulneſſe, his glory and ſhining is as the ſhining of the body of the Sun, ours as the light of the Aire, which is derived from the glory of the Sun; ours is but the fulneſſe of the ſtreame and of the veſſell, but the fulneſſe of the fountaine and of the ſpring is his; thereupon

Simile.

SER. XIV. Col. 1. 18.

he is called *the head of the Church*, the head is the tower of the body which hath all the five ſenſes in it, and wiſedom for the whole body. It ſeeth, heareth, underſtandeth, and doth all for the body, having influence into the other parts of it: So Chriſt is above all, and hath influence into all his Church, not only eminencie, but influence.

*That Chriſt is ſet forth by all earthly excellencies. Mal. 4 2.*

What is excellent in the Heavens? *the Sunne, So Chriſt is the Sunne of Righteouſneſſe: the Starres; He is the bright morning Starre: the Light; He is the Light of the world.* Come to all Creatures, you have not any excellent amongſt them but Chriſt is ſtiled from it: He is *the Lyon of the tribe of Juda*, the Lilly and the Roſe, and *the Lambe of God that taketh away the ſins of the world, the Tree of Life*, &c. There is not a thing neceſſary to nature, but you have a ſtile from it given to Chriſt, to ſhew that he is as neceſſary as *Bread* and *Water*, and the food of life. When we ſee *Light* therefore, thinke of the *true Light*: when the *Sunne*, thinke of the *Sunne of Righteouſneſſe*: ſo remember *the bread and water of life* in our common food; therefore the Sacraments were ordained, that as we goe to the ſea by the conduct of rivers, ſo we might goe to the ſea of all excellency and goodneſſe, by the conduct of theſe riveis of goodneſſe to be led by every excellency in the creature to that of our Mediatour Chriſt, who is *the chiefeſt among ten thouſand.*

Joh 6. ob. 4

*Simile.*

*That Chriſt only was King, Prieſt, and Prophet.*

To come more particularly to ſpeake of his excellencies, omitting his *two natures* in one Perſon, *God* and *Man*, that we may conſider his Offices, a *King*, *Prieſt*, and *Prophet*: He being the chiefe

Ser. XIV.

chiefe in all theſe, ſo all good *Kings* before him were types of him, as alſo the *Prophets* and *Prieſts*, he was all in one. Never any before him was *King*, *Prieſt*, and *Prophet*, as he was *King*, *Prieſt*, and *Prophet* in one, ſo in every reſpect he was incomparable above all. Such a *King*, as is *King* of *Kings*, and ſubdueth things unconquerable to all other *Kings*, even the greateſt enemies of all, ſuch a *King* as conquered the *World*, *Death*, *Hell*, and *Sinne*, all things that are terrible: *Death* you know is called the *King of feares*, becauſe it terrifieth even Kings themſelves. Chriſt is ſuch a *King* as takes away theſe terrible greateſt ills of all: Such a *King* as rules over the ſoule and conſcience (the beſt part of man) where he ſettles and ſtabliſheth peace: Such a *King* as ſets up his Kingdome in our very ſoules and hearts, guides our thoughts, deſires, actions, and affections, ſetting up a peaceable government there: ſo he is an incomparable *King* even in regard of that Office, *He is the chiefeſt of ten thouſand*, ſuch a *King* as carries the government upon his own ſhoulders; as it is *Iſa 6.9.* He devolves not the care to another to make it as he liſt, and ſo be a cypher himſelfe, but he carries all upon his own ſhoulder, he needs not a *Pope* for his Vicar.

1. *A King.*

Againe, as a *Prieſt*, ſuch a *High-prieſt* as offered himſelf a ſacrifice by his *Eternall Spirit*: He as *God* offered up his *Man-hood*: ſuch a *Prieſt* as hath ſatisfied the wrath of God, and reconciled God to Man Allother *Prieſts* were but types of this *Prieſt*, who is ſuch a *prieſt* as never dyes, *but lives for ever to make interceſſion for us in Heaven*, by vertue of

2. *A Prieſt.*

SER. XIV.

that ſacrifice which he offered in the dayes of his fleſh: He was both *Prieſt* and *Sacrifice*, ſuch a *prieſt as is touched with our infirmities*, ſo *milde* and *gentle*, full of pity and mercy. No *Prieſt* to this *prieſt*, God onely ſmelt a ſweet ſmell from this ſacrifice.

3. *A Prophet.*

And for his *Prophticall Office*, he is a prophet beyond all others, ſuch a one as can inſtruct the ſoul: Other men can propound doctrine, but he can open the underſtanding, and hath the key of the heart, the *key of David* which can open the ſoul, by his holy Spirit he can make the very ſimple full of knowledge; ſuch a Prophet as hath his chaire in the very heart of man, this great *Biſhop of our ſouls*, *the Angell of the Covenant*, that λόγος *the meſſenger of the Father*: ſo he is *the chief of ten thouſand*; conſider him as *King*, as *Prieſt*, or as *Prophet*.

Luk. 24. Prov. 1.

1 Pet. 2.25. λόγος.

*Vſe.*

The uſe of this is exceeding pregnant, comfortable and large, that we have ſuch a Saviour, ſuch an eminent perſon, ſo near, ſo peculiar to us; *Our beloved, my beloved*; If he were a *beloved the chiefe of ten thouſand*, it were no great matter, but he is mine, he is thus excellent; excellent conſidered with propriety in it, and a peculiar propriety: *peculiarity and propriety together with tranſcendent excellency makes happy, if there be any enjoying of it.* Therefore repent not your ſelves of your repentings, but thinke I have not caſt away my love, but have ſet it upon ſuch an object as deſerves it, *for my beloved is the chiefeſt of ten thouſand.*

*Happineſs, what.*

THE

# The fiftenth Sermon.

Cant. V. X.

*My Beloved is white and ruddy, the chiefeſt among ten thouſand.*

*Love* is ſuch a boundleſſe affection, that where it once breaks forth in praiſes upon a good foundation, it knowes no meaſure, as we ſee here in the Church, who being provoked, and (as it were) exaſperated by the *daughters of Ieruſalem*, to explaine the excellency of him ſhee had with ſo much affection inceſſantly ſought after, That ſhe might juſtifie her choice (ere ſhe deſcend into particulars) ſhe breaks forth into this generall deſcription of her Beloved, whereby ſhe cuts off from all hopes of equalling him, *My Beloved is white and ruddy* (exceeding faire) nay, *the chief among ten thouſand* (none like him) ſhe would not have us thinke ſhe had beſtowed her love but on the moſt excellent of all, *the chief of ten thouſand.* Well were it for us that we could doe ſo in our love, that we might be able to juſtifie our choice, not to ſpend it on ſinfull, vaine and unprofitable things, which cauſe repentance and mourning in the concluſion, whereof the Church here worthily cleareth her ſelfe, in that ſhe had choſen *the chief among ten thouſand.*

And

SER. XV.

Col. 1. 11.

Mat. 12.

Joh. 5.

Luk. 7. 44. *That Chriſt takes part with the afflicted ſide.*

And moſt juſtly did ſhe place her affections upon ſo excellent an object, who was ſo full of *all the treaſures of wiſdome and knowledge, the life of our life, in whom dwelt all the fulneſſe of the Godhead bodily,* in whom was a gracious mixture and compound of all heavenly graces, where *Greatneſſe* and *Goodneſſe*, *Iuſtice* and *Mercy*, *God* and *Man* meet in one Perſon. Such an one who breaks *no bruiſed reed, nor quenches the ſmoaking flax*, who refuſes not ſinners, but invites them unto him, offering to heale all and cure all who come unto him: He is a King indeed; but this alſo approves her choice; he rules all, commands all, judges all, what then can ſhe want who hath ſuch a friend, ſuch a husband, whoſe government is ſo winning, milde and mercifull?

He is not ſuch a *Monarch* as loves to get authority by ſternneſſe like *Rehoboam*; but by thoſe amiable graces of *gentleneſſe* and *love*, all the excellencies of holineſſe, purity and righteouſneſſe are ſweetly tempered with love and meekneſſe in him. You may ſee for inſtance how he takes his Diſciples part againſt the *Phariſees*, and the poore womans that came to waſh his feet and kiſſed them, againſt the *Phariſee* that had invited him to dinner. The Church is a company of deſpiſed people that are ſcorned of Phariſaicall proud ſpirits, who perhaps have morality and ſtrength of parts to praiſe them with. Now Chriſt takes part with the broken ſpirits againſt all proud ſpirits, howſoever he be gone to Heaven (where he is full of Majeſty) yet he hath not forgotten his meekneſſe, not changed his nature

with change of honour. He is now more honoured then he was; for, *he hath a Name above al Names in Heaven or in Earth*, yet he is pitifull ſtill. *Saul, Saul, why perſecuteſt thou me?* He makes the Churches caſe his own ſtill; together with beames of glory, there are bowels of pitty in him, the ſame that he had here upon earth: Which makes him ſo lovely to the truly broken hearted beleeving ſoule, *My Beloved is white and ruddy.* Acts 9.

He is ſet out likewiſe by comparing him with all others whatſoever, *he is the chiefe of ten thouſand*, a certain number for uncertain, that is, the chiefe among all. In all things Chriſt hath the preeminence; *He is the firſt borne from the dead, he is the firſt borne of every creature, he is the eldeſt brother*, he is the chiefe among all: For all *Kings, Prieſts*, & *Prophets* before were but types & ſhadowes of him: He the body, the truth & the ſubſtance. And (as was ſhewed before) he is all three in one, *King, Prieſt*, and *Prophet*, the great *Doctor* & *Prophet* of his Church, that ſpake by all the former Prophets, & ſpeaks by his Miniſters to the end of the world. *The Angel of the Covenant*, that λόγος the word that expreſſeth his Fathers breſt, that as he came from the boſome of his Father, ſo layes open his counſel to mankind. It was he that ſpake by *Noah*, and preached by his Spirit to the ſoules that are now in priſon (as *Peter* ſpeaks) ſo *he is the chiefe among all*: But eſpecially in regard of his Righteouſneſſe: for which *Paul accounted all dung and droſſe to be found in Chriſt not having his own Righteouſneſſe, but the Righteouſneſſe which is in Chriſt*; which is more than the Righteouſneſſe of 1 Pet. 3. 19. Phil. 3. 8.

Ser. XV.

of an Angel, being the Righteouſneſſe of God-Man, & above all the Righteouſneſſe of the Law.

*Queſt.* *But what is this to us, or to the Church?* Yes, for his beauty and excellency is the Churches, becauſe he is the Churches. *My Beloved is white and ruddy, and my Beloved is the chief among ten thouſand.* It is the peculiar intereſt that the Church hath in Chriſt that doth reliſh her Spirit, excellency with propriety in him: *I am my Beloveds, and my Beloved is mine.* The more excellent the husband is, the more excellent is the wife, ſhe onely ſhines in his beames; therefore it is the intereſt that we have in Chriſt that indears Chriſt to us. But to come to more particular application of it, Is Chriſt thus excellent, ſuperexcellent, thus tranſcendently excellent, *white and ruddy, the chief of ten thouſand?* This ſerves,

*Anſw.* That particularity of intereſt joyned with the excellency of Chriſt, is that which ſo raviſheth the Church.

1. *To draw thoſe that are not yet in Chriſt unto him.*

2. *To comfort thoſe that are in Chriſt.*

*Vſe* 1. That ſupereminent excellencies in Chriſt ought to draw thoſe to him who are not yet drawn to him.

First, thoſe that are not yet in Chriſt, not contracted to him, to draw them, what can prevaile more than that which is in Chriſt? beauty & excellencies, greatneſſe and goodneſſe. And indeed one main end of our calling to the Miniſtery is, to lay open and to unfold the unſearcheable riches of Chriſt, to dig up the Mine, thereby to draw the affections of thoſe that belong to God to Chriſt.

That with a ſight of Chriſts excellency we muſt ſee our own debt, beggery and miſery to draw us unto Chriſt.

But it is not enough to know that there are excellencies in Chriſt to draw us to him; but, *there muſt be a ſight of our miſery, what beggers we are and how indebted.* Before we are in Chriſt wee are not our owne, the Devill layes claime to us that we are his, death layes claime to us, we are under

ſinne,

SER. XV.

ſinne, we cannot ſatisfie one of a thouſand; therefore this inforceth to make out to joyne with him that can diſcharge all our debts, anſwer all our ſuits, and non-ſuit Satan in the Court of Heaven. When once we are married to the Lord of Heave and earth, all is ours: We have a large Charter, *All things are yours, and you are Chriſts, and Chriſt is Gods.* 1 Cor.3.22.

*Why are all things ours?* *Queſt.*

Becauſe we are married to Chriſt who is Lord of all. It is the end of our calling to ſue for a marriage between Chriſt and every ſoule, we are the friends of the Bride to bring the Church to him, and the friends of the Church to bring Chriſt to them. It is the end of our Miniſtery to bring the ſoule and Chriſt together; and let no debts, no ſinnes hinder, for eſpecially he invites ſuch as are ſenſible of their ſinnes, *Where ſinne abounds, grace abounds much more: Come unto me all ye that are weary and heavy laden.* And, *he came to ſeeke and to ſave that which was loſt.* He requires no more, but that we be ſenſible of our debts & miſeries, which ſenſe he works likewiſe by his holy Spirit. *Anſw.* *That ſeeing the end of our miſery is to woo us to come unto Chriſt, we ſhould not be diſcouraged to come unto him.* Rom 3.20. Mat.11.28. Luk.19.10.

Againe, for thoſe that have entertained Chriſt, *let them ſee what an excellent gracious Perſon they have entertained*, who is *the chief of ten thouſand.* The world thinks them a company of ſilly mean people that make choice of Chriſt, Religion, the Word, and ſuch things, but here is a juſtification of their choice, they chooſe him that is *the chief of ten thouſand, Let him kiſſe me with the kiſſes of his mouth* (ſaith the Spouſe) *for thy love is better than wine, nay then life it ſelfe.* A Chriſtian may juſtifie the *For thoſe in the ſtate of grace to ſee what an excellent perſon they have entertained.* Cant.1. Luk.10.41.

SER. XV.

the choice that he hath made with *Mary of the good part*, againſt all thoſe that ſhall diſparage his choice. Let the world account Chriſtians what they will, that they are a company of deluded, beſotted perſons, fooles and mad men. The Chriſtian is the only wiſe man: *wiſedom is ſeen in choice eſpecially*; and here is the choice of that which is excellent and moſt excellent of all, *the chief of ten thouſand.*

*Vſe 5.*
*The deſperate miſerable choiſe of moſt men.*

So alſo, *We may ſee here the deſperate & baſe folly of all whatſoever (ſave true Chriſtians)* what do they make choyce of to joyne to that which is baſe, the condemned world, vaine tranſitory things, and refuſe Chriſt? Are they in their right wits who refuſe a husband that is noble for birth, rich for eſtate, mighty for power, abundant in kindneſſe and love it ſelf, every way excellent, and take a baſe, ignoble, beggerly perſon? this is the choice of the world; God complaines, *Iſrael would none of me*, &c. What ſhall we judge therefore of thoſe that will none of Chriſt when he wooes and ſues them, but preſer with *Eſau* a meſſe of pottage before their eternall birth-right; with *Adam* an apple before Paradiſe; and with *Judas* thirty peices of ſilver before Chriſt himſelf? This is the ſtate of many men. *To be married to Chriſt is to take him for an husband, to be ruled by him in all things.* Now when we prefer baſe commodities & contentments before peace of conſcience, and the enjoying of his love; what is it, but for pelf and commodity, thirty peices of ſilver (perhaps for ſix pence, a thing of nothing) to refuſe Chriſt? yet this is the condition of baſe worldlings that live by ſenſe and not by faith.

Pſal 81.

*What it is to be married to Chriſt.*

So

So then as it ſerves to comfort thoſe that have made a true choice, ſo it ſerves to ſhew the madneſſe & folly of all others, which one day will feel their hearts full of horrour and confuſion, & their faces of ſhame, when they ſhall think, What hath Chriſt made ſuch ſute to my heart to win my love? hath he ordained a Miniſtery for to bring me in? made ſuch large promiſes, is he ſo excellent? and was this diſcovered to me, and yet would I none of him? what did I chuſe? & what did I leave? I left Chriſt with all his riches, and made choice of the *pleaſures and profits of ſinne, which are but for a ſeaſon.* When the conſcience is once throughly awaked, this will torment it, the puniſhment of loſſe, not of loſſe ſimply, as the loſſe of Chriſt and the loſſe of Heaven, but *the loſſe of Chriſt and of Heaven ſo diſcovered and opened*; therefore there is no condition in the world ſo terrible as of thoſe that live in the Church, and heare thoſe things of Chriſt crucified unfolded to them before their eyes, as *Paul* ſpeaks of the Miniſtery, it makes Chriſts Croſſe ſo open to them as if he had been crucified before their eyes; yet notwithſtanding yeeld to their baſe hearts deſires and affections before thoſe excellencies, which if they had a ſpirit of faith would draw their hearts to him.

Heb. 11.

*That the greateſt loſſe of all is Chriſt diſcovered in his excellency.*

Gal. 3.

Therefore let us conſider how we heare thoſe things, it concernes us nearly; on the one ſide we ſee what we get if we joyne with Chriſt, we have him and his; on the contrary we loſe him; and not onely ſo, but we gaine eternall miſery, and periſh eternally. O what baſeneſſe of minde poſſeſſeth

*To take heed how we heare.*

Ser. XV.

ſeſſed us! Chriſt left all things in love to us, & we leave Chriſt for any paultry thing in the world almoſt, to pleaſe & content the humours of ſinfull men, to attain a few empty titles, to get a little wealth, enjoy a little pleaſure. You ſee then the equity of that terrible commination that you have, 1 *Cor.* 16. *If any man love not the Lord Ieſus Chriſt, let him be Anathema maranatha*; let him be accurſed for ever that loves not the Lord Jeſus Chriſt: If any man ſinne, there is a remedy to diſcharge his ſin in Jeſus Chriſt, if he will marry him and take him; But when Chriſt is offered, & we will have none of him, we ſin againſt the Goſpell, and then there is no remedy, there is nothing but *Anathema* & *Maranatha*, therefore *the moſt dangerous ſinnes of all, are thoſe againſt the light of the Goſpell*: when yet we choſe rather to live as we liſt, then to joyne our ſelves to Chriſt. To this purpoſe, *Heb.* 2. Saint *Paul* makes an uſe of the firſt Chap. wherein he ſets out the excellency of Chriſt whom the Angels adore; he is ſo beautifull, ſo lovely, that God the Father is in love with him, and pronounceth, *this is my beloved Sonne*: In the beginning of the ſecond Chapter, *Wherefore* (ſaith he) *how ſhall we eſcape if we neglect ſo great ſalvation*; for, *if they eſcaped not that diſpiſed Moſes Law*, &c. *How ſhall we eſcape if we neglect ſo great ſalvation?* he ſayes not, *if we oppoſe Chriſt*; but if we neglect him, if we doe not love ſo great falvation, as 2 *Theſ.* 1. 8. it is ſaid, *Chriſt will come in flaming fire to take vengeance of all thoſe that doe not know God, and obey not the Goſpell of Chriſt*, though they doe not perſecute it.

Mat. 3. 17.
Heb. 2.

Therefore this reproves all civill morall perſons, that

Serm. XV.

that thinke they have riches enough, not only debauched perſons, but ſelfe-ſufficient perſons, that thinke they have any Righteouſneſſe of their owne, let them know, *that Chriſt ſhall come in flaming fire to take vengeance of ſuch.* This is the ſcope of the ſecond Pſalme, which ye know ſets out the excellency of Chriſt, *I have ſet my King upon Zion*, God the Father there anoints Chriſt King of the Church: To what end? *That we ſhould kiſſe the Sonne*, kiſſe him with the kiſſe of ſubjection (as *Subjects* do their *Prince*) with the kiſſe of *love*, as the *Spouſe* doth her *Husband*, and with the *kiſſe of faith.* But what if we doe not kiſſe him, and ſubject our ſelves to him, love him and believe in him? *If his wrath be once kindled, happy are all thoſe that truſt in him.* He is a Lambe, but ſuch an one as can be angry, as *Rev. 6.* it is ſaid, *The Kings and great perſons of the world fly from the wrath of the Lambe*; He that is ſo ſweet, milde and gentle, if we joyne with him, on the contrary, if we come not unto him, we ſhall finde the wrath of the Lambe a terrible wrath, which the greateſt Potentates in the world ſhall deſire to be hid from. *If his wrath be once kindled, bleſſed are all thoſe that truſt in him*, and woe be to them that doe not receive him,

Pſal. 2. *What it is to kiſſe the Son.*

For us that profeſſe our ſelves to be in Chriſt, and to be joyned to him that is thus excellent, let us make this uſe, *to make him the rule of our choice in other things. In the choice of friends chuſe ſuch as are friends to Chriſt*, take heed of ſociety with Idolaters, or with prophane wretched perſons. If you will be joyned to Chriſt, and profeſſe your

*Uſe 2.*

*For thoſe who are in Chriſt to make him the rule of their choice in other things. In Friendſhip*

SER. XV.

*In marriage.*

your ſelves to be ſo, then let us joyne to none but thoſe that we can enjoy and Chriſt too: So in *marriage* let the rule of choice be, the love of Chriſt; and likewiſe let the meaſure of our reſpect to all things, be the reſpect to Chriſt, let us meaſure our love to wife and children, to kindred, friends, and to all creatures whatſoever, as it may ſtand with love to Chriſt. Obey in the Lord, marry in the Lord, doe all things in the Lord, ſo as may ſtand with the love and allowance of the Lord.

*In all things whatſoever, love all with reference to Chriſt.*
1 Cor. 7 39.

*Uſe 3.*
*For direction.*

Make alſo a Uſe of direction, How to come to value Chriſt thus, as to keep an high eſteeme of him; for this followes infallibly and undeniably: If Chriſt be *the chief of ten thouſand*, he muſt have the chief of our affections, *above ten thouſand*; for as he is in excellency, he muſt have place in our hearts anſwerable thereunto; for then our ſoules are as they ſhould be, when they judge of, and affect things as they are in themſelves.

*Anſw. 1.*
*By a deep conſideration of our neceſſity without him.*

Firſt, let us enter into a ſerious conſideration of the need we have of Chriſt, of our miſery without him, of our happineſſe if we be joyned with him: the ſoule being thus convinced, the affections muſt needs follow the ſanctified judgement.

*That exalting Chriſt high in the heart, is a ſtrong preſervative againſt ſinne.*

What will come of it, if Chriſt be ſet in the higheſt place in our heart? If we crowne him there, and make him *King of Kings, and Lord of Lords*, in a hearty ſubmitting of all the affections of the ſoule to him; while the ſoule continues in that frame, it cannot be drawne to ſin, diſcomfort, and deſpaire. The honours, pleaſures and profits that are got by baſe engage-

ments

ments to the humours of men, what are theſe to Chriſt? when the ſoule is rightly poſſeſt of Chriſt and of his excellency, it diſdaines that any thing ſhould come in competition with him.

Againe, *It ſtands firme againſt all diſcouragements whatſoever*; for it ſets Chriſt againſt all, who is *the chief of ten thouſand.* The ſoule in this caſe will ſet Chriſt againſt the anger and wrath of God, againſt Satan and all our ſpirituall enemies. Chriſt is the Angell of the Covenant, Satan is a Lyon, a roaring Lyon; Chriſt the Lyon of the tribe of Judah; Satan a Serpent, a Dragon: But Chriſt the true Brazen Serpent, the very looking upon whom will take away all the ſtings and fiery darts of Satan whatſoever: wherefore it is ſaid, 1 *Iohn* 5. that Faith is that that overcometh the world. *How doth Faith overcome the world?* Becauſe it overcomes all things in the world; as on the right hand, pleaſures, and profits, and honours, and on the left hand, threatnings, paines, loſſes, and diſgraces, by ſetting Chriſt againſt all.

2. *We muſt labour to weane our hearts from other things.*

Againe, if we would have a right judgement and eſteeme of Chriſt; *Let us labour to weane our affections as much as may be from other things.* Fleſhly hearts that have run ſo deeply into the world and vanities of this preſent life, it is in a ſort an extraordinary taske for them to be drawn away, and pulled from the world (as a childe from a full breaſt) which they have ſucked ſo long. Now for ſweet affections that are tender, it is an excellent advantage they have to conſider betimes that there is that in Religion and in the Goſpell, which is worth their beſt and prime

SER. XVI

1 Tim. 3. 5. *The danger of delaying to ſeek Chriſt late in our old age:*

affections, the flower and marrow of them, let them begin with young *Timothy*, *Daniel* and *Ioſeph*, to love Chriſt from their childe-hood. It is a deſperate folly on the other hand to put off the regard of good things till after when we ſhall be leſſe fit, when the *underſtanding* will be darkned, and the affections blunted, when we ſhall not have that edge, nature being decayed, and the world having taken ſuch poſſeſſion of the ſoule, that we ſhall not value this excellency; therefore let us begin betimes to make up the marriage betweene Chriſt and the ſoule; no time indeed is too late, but it were to be wiſhed that thoſe that are young would be thus wiſe for their ſoules betimes.

*To value Chriſt we muſt beg of God a Spirit to judge aright of our corruptions.*

Beſides, if we would highly value Chriſt, *beg of God a Spirit that we may judge aright of our corruptions*: for, *in what meaſure we can diſcerne the height, and bredth, and depth of our corrupt nature, in that meaſure ſhall we judge of the height, and bredth, and depth of the excellency of Chriſt.* The ſweeteſt ſoules, are the moſt humble ſoules; thoſe that love Chriſt moſt, are thoſe that have been ſtung moſt with the ſenſe of their ſinnes; *where ſinne moſt abounds in the ſenſe & feeling of it, grace much more abounds in the ſenſe and feeling of that.* Did ever ſoule love Chriſt more than that woman that had ſo many devils caſt out of her? And *Paul* that had ſuch great ſinnes forgiven? Doth any man ſo love his creditor as he that hath much debt forgiven him? it is our Saviour Chriſts owne reaſon, therefore theſe two goe alwaies with the true Church.

Rom 5.

Luk. 7.

1. *The true knowledge of the corruption of nature, and miſery by rea-*

*ſon*

*ſon of it.* And 2. *The true ſenſe and feeling of it, with true and hearty ſorrow for it*, &c. In Popery they ſleight Originall ſinne, that mother-breeding ſin; Actuall ſins be veniall ſins, and many ſins no ſins. And therefore they eſteeme ſo ſleightly of Chriſt, that they joyne *Saints*, the *Pope*, *Works* and *Satisfaction* with him, becauſe they know not the depth of the malady, how blacke ſinne is, what a curſed eſtate we are in by nature: *they have ſleight, ſhallow, and weake conceits of ſinne, therefore they have anſwerable, weake, and ſhallow conceits of Chriſt, and of his Righteouſneſſe and excellency.* Therefore the conviction of our ſins goeth before the conviction of Righteouſneſſe in Chriſt (as it is ſaid, *Joh.* 16.) The Holy-Ghoſt *ſhall convince the world of ſin*, and then *of Righteouſneſſe*; for except the ſoule be convinced of ſin and ill in it ſelfe, it will never be truly convinced of good, and of Righteouſneſſe in Chriſt.

*Why ſin is ſo ſleighted in Popery.*

The *Paſſeover* was al waies eaten with ſowre herbs, becauſe it ſhould adde a reliſh to the feaſt: So Chriſt the true *Paſſeover* we never reliſhed truely without ſowre herbs, the conſideration of ſinne with the deſert of it. Chriſt ſavours otherwiſe to a man humbled for his ſinnes, than he doth to another man not touched therewith; otherwiſe to a man humbled for his ſinnes, than he doth to another man not touched therewith; otherwiſe to a poore man than he doth to a rich; otherwiſe to a man that the world goes not well on his ſide, than to a proſperous man. One ſavoury diſcourſe of Chriſt reliſheth more to an afflicted ſoule, than ſeven diſcourſes with ſuch as are

*Why the Paſſeover was eaten with ſowre herbs.*

SER. XV.

drunke with proſperity, not having a brain ſtrong enough to conceive, nor an appetite to reliſh heavenly things.

*That it is our great folly to murmure at the croſſe which recovers our ſpirituall taſte and reliſh.*

Therefore why do we murmure at the croſſe, when all is to recover our ſpirituall taſte and reliſh? *Solomon* had loſt his taſte and reliſh of Chriſt, he never made his *Song of Songs* when he was in his idolatrous way, nor was ſo in love with Chriſt and his excellencies when he doted ſo much upon his wives: no, but when he had recovered his ſpirits, taſte, and reliſh of heavenly things once, then made he the booke of the *Preacher*. When hee had run through variety of things, and ſaw all to be nothing but vexation of ſpirit; and beſides that, vanity, then he paſſeth his verdict upon all things that they were vanity. So it is with us, we can hardly prize Chriſt without ſome afflictions, ſome croſſe or other; therefore here the Church is faine to endure a ſpirituall deſertion, to ſet an edge upon her affections. Now when ſhe is thus in her deſertions, *Chriſt is white and ruddy, the chiefe of ten thouſand.*

*Want makes us value things the more.*

We value more, and ſet a higher prize on things in the want of them (ſuch is our corruption) then in the enjoying of them. And if God remember us not with affliction, then let us afflict, humble and judge our ſelves, enter into our owne ſoules to view how we ſtand affected to Chriſt, to Heaven, and to heavenly things: how do I reliſh and eſteeme them? If I have loſt my eſteeme and valuing, where have I loſt it, conſider in what ſinne, in what pleaſure, in what company I loſt it; and converſe no more with ſuch as dull our affections to heavenly things.

And

SER. XV.

4.

*To eſtime Chriſt highly, uſing our infirmities to this, and looking upon them.*
Iſa. 64 6.

And, *Let us make uſe likewiſe of our infirmities and ſinnes to this purpoſe, to ſet an high prize on the excellencies of Chriſt*: we carry about us alwaies infirmities and corruptions, what uſe ſhall we make of them? not to truſt to our owne righteouſneſſe, which is *as a defiled cloth*. But fly to *Chriſts righteouſneſſe*, which is the *Righteouſneſſe of God-man*, all being as *dung and droſſe* in regard of that: Often thinke with thy ſelf, What am I, a poore ſinfull creature, but I have a Righteouſneſſe in Chriſt that anſwers all: I am weak in my ſelfe, but Chriſt is ſtrong, and I am ſtrong in him. I am fooliſh in my ſelfe, but I am wiſe in him, what I want in my ſelfe, I have in him, he is mine, and his Righteouſneſſe is mine, which is the *Righteouſneſſe of God-man*, being cloathed with this I ſtand ſafe againſt *Conſcience, Hell, Wrath*, and whatſoever; Though I have daily experience of my ſinnes, yet there is more *Righteouſneſs* in Chriſt who is mine, and who is *the chief of ten thouſand*, then there is ſinne in me. When thus we ſhall know Chriſt, then we ſhall know him to purpoſe.

# The fiftenth Sermon.

## Cant. V. X, XI, XII, XIII:

*My Beloved is white and ruddy, the chiefeſt among ten thouſand.*

*His head is as fine gold, his locks are buſhie and black as a Raven.*

*His eyes are as the eyes of Doves, by the rivers of waters, waſhed with milke and fitly ſet,* &c.

*Object.* *How one mans ſatisfaction ſhall ſatisfie for the ſins of all.*

HEnce likewiſe we may anſwer ſome doubts that may ariſe, as why the death of one man (*Chriſt*) ſhould be of value for ſatisfaction for the ſinnes of the whole world? how can this be?

*Anſw.* O but what kinde of man was he? *the chiefe among ten thouſand*, eſpecially conſidering that his excellency ariſeth from the grace of his Perſonall Union of God and Man. The firſt *Adam* tainted thouſands, and would have tainted a world of men more if there had been more; but he was meere man that did this, and ſhall not Chriſt, God and Man, the ſecond *Adam*, advance the world, and ten thouſand worlds if there had been more? *He is chiefe among ten thouſand.*

*His head is as moſt fine gold, his locks are buſhie and black as a Raven*, &c.

1. Po-

1. *Poſitively, He is white and ruddy.* 2. *Comparatively, He is the chiefeſt of ten thouſand.*

The Church doth not thinke it ſufficient in generall to ſet out Chriſt thus, but ſhe deſcends into a particular deſcription of him by all the parts of a body that are conſpicuous. Firſt in generall obſerve hence, *That it is the nature of love upon all occaſions to reflect upon the thing loved.* As the Church here, from things that are excellent in the world, borrowes phraſes and compariſons to ſet out the excellency of Chriſt, exalting him above any other thing. Whatſoever the ſoule of a Chriſtian ſees in Heaven or Earth, it takes occaſion thence to thinke of Chriſt.

*Love is ever induſtrious to ſet out the praiſes of the Beloved.*

Again, In generall obſerve from hence, ſeeing the Church fetcheth compariſon from Doves eyes, from the body of a man and other things, *That there are ſome beams of excellency in every creature.* There is ſomewhat of God in every creature, this makes the meditation of the creature to be uſefull: There is none, even the meaneſt, but it hath a being, and thereby in a ſort ſets out the being of God. Why doth God ſtile himſelf a Shield, a Rock, a Buckler, a Shadow, and the like? but to ſhew that there is ſomething of him in theſe, and therefore to teach us to riſe from them to him, in whom all thoſe excellencies that are ſcattered in them are united.

*The divers relations God takes upon him, ſhewes the beams of his excellency in the creatures.*

In innocency we knew God, and in him we had knowledge of the creature, but now we are faine to help our ſelves from the knowledge of the creature to riſe to the knowledge of God.

*His head is as fine gold.*

SER. XVI.

*That nothing can diſ-hearten the Church from commending Chriſt.*

A little in generall, ſee the boldeneſſe & largeneſſ- of the Churches affections, who though ſhe had been ill intreated by the *Watchmen* and others, yet is ſhe not diſheartned for all this? no, ſhe goes on, and ſets out particular commendations of her Beloved. Where love hath any ſtrength, no water can quench it. You ſee the Church here found but cold entertainment from the *Watchmen* and others that ſhould have been better.

*Her inward deſertions diſcourage her not.*

Nay, She was in deſertion, yet ſhe was not diſcouraged, nay not from the deſertion that Chriſt left her in; but ſhe ſeeks after him whom her ſoule loved. Oh, this is the ſigne of a true ſanctified ſoule toucht from Heaven, never to give over ſeeking of Chriſt, nor ſetting out his praiſes, no though it thinks it ſelfe not beloved of Chriſt. Aske ſuch ones, Do you love God, his Children, and his Word? Oh you ſhall have them eloquent, no words are enough to ſet out their affections.

*Reaſon of the firſt loves eagerneſſe.*

Hoſ. 2.

And this is one reaſon, whith we may note by the way, why God plants in his children at their firſt converſion a ſweet love, which we call *the firſt love*, that when deſertions come, they may call to minde what they felt from Chriſt, and what they bore to him; and thereupon the Church concludes, *Hoſ.* 2. *I will returne to my firſt love, for then was I better than now.* The Church here from what doth ſhe commend her Beloued? but from ſomewhat that was left in her ſoul, ſome inward taſte of the love of Chriſt in her, ſhe called to minde how it was with her before in the former part of this, and in the latter end of the former Chapter, what an excellent eſtate ſhe had

had been in, this helped her to recover her ſelfe.

Now you may ſay, *Why is ſhe ſo exact in reckoning up ſo many particulars of her Beloved, his Head Lockes, Eyes, Lips,* and ſuch like?

*Why the Church is ſo exact in particulariſing her Beloved.*

Why, It is from largeneſſe of affection. *A large heart hath alway large expreſſions*; when wee are barren in expreſſions towards Chriſt, and of good things, whence comes this but from narrow poor affections? The Church had large affections; therefore ſhe had ſutable expreſſions.

1.

*Becauſe a large heart hath unſatisfied affections.*

And then ſhe is thus particular, becauſe Chriſt hath not one but many excellencies; every thing in him is excellent, inward & outward, as his head, &c. For indeed beauty conſiſts not in ſweetneſſe of colour only, but in affinity and proportion of all parts. Now there is all ſweet proportion in Chriſt: ſo it ſhould be with Chriſtians; they ſhould not have one excellency, but many: thoſe that receive *Grace for Grace* from Chriſt, have not onely Head, Eyes, Hands, and Feet good; but all lovely, *Grace for Grace*, anſwerable to the variety of Graces in in Jeſus Chriſt, in whom all things joyntly, and every thing ſeverally are lovely.

2.

*Becauſe Chriſt hath not one, but many excellencies in him. Beauty wherein it conſiſts.*

Joh. 1.

Then ſhe ſhewed her particular care and ſtudy, to be exact in this knowledge of Chriſt; to rip him up and anatomize him thus from *Head* to *Foot*, it argueth ſhe had ſtudied Chriſt well ere ſhe could attaine this excellency: ſo it ſhould be the ſtudy and care of every Chriſtian to ſtudy the excellencies of Chriſt, not only in the groſſe, to ſay as much as you have in the *Creed*; he was borne for us of the *Virgin Mary*, was crucified, dead

3.

*Becauſe ſhe had ſeriouſly and exactly ſtudied Chriſt to purpoſe.*

SER. XVI.

dead and buried, &c. which every childe can ſay; but to be able to particularize the high perfections and excellencies of Chriſt, as the Church here, to ſtudy his Nature, Offices, the ſtate he was in, and how he carried himſelfe in his humiliation and exaltation: what good we have by both ſtates; *Redemption* by his *abaſement*; *application of it* by his *advancement*. What he did for us on Earth; what he doth in Heaven; what in *Juſtification*, *Adoption*, *Sanctification*, and in the glory to come. Study every thing, and warme the heart with the meditation of them.

*That all humane eloquence comes ſhort of the excellencies of Chriſt.*

This particular ſpreading and laying open the excellencies of Chriſt, is a thing worthy of a Chriſtian. We make ſleight worke of Religion, we can be particular and eloquent enough in other things, but in that wherein all eloquence is too little, how barren are we, how ſhamefaced to ſpeake of Chriſt and his excellencies in baſe company, as if it were a diſhonour? Let us therefore learne this from the Church here, to be much in thoughts and meditations of the excellencies of Chriſt, and ſo our expreſſions will be anſwerable to our meditations. So the holy Fathers that were godly (till another kinde of Divinity came into the world of Querkes and Subtilties) there was none of them but was excellent this way. *Paul* admirable, accounting all dung and droſſe in compariſon of Chriſt. In ſpeaking of him when he begins, he goes on from one thing to another, as if he were raviſhed, and knew not how nor where to end.

*That the ſoul hath peculiar ſights of its owne.*

The ſoule hath ſights of Chriſt that God ſhewes to it, and which the ſoule preſents to it ſelfe

SER. XVI.

ſelfe by the help of the Spirit. The ſights that God in this kinde ſhewes, are to thoſe in affliction eſpecially, as *Daniel* and *Eſau* ſaw Chriſt in his glory in a viſion: ſo *Ezechiel* had a viſion, and *John Rev.* 1. where Chriſt was preſented to him gloriouſly. So there is a glorious deſcription of Chriſt preſent to the Church, *Rev.* 4 5.

*Sights of faith which the ſoule frames of Chriſt*

And as there are ſights let downe from God into the ſoule, ſo there are ſights that the ſoul frames of Chriſt, ſuch as the Church here conceives of him by *faith*: Thus *Moſes* ſaw him before he was incarnate, and *Abraham* ſaw his day and rejoyced: ſo ſhould we now have ſpiritual ſights, *Ideas* of Chriſt framed to our ſoules, this is to beſtow our ſoules as we ſhould doe. So much for generall, now wee come to ſome particulars. ***His head is as fine gold, his locks are buſhie and black as a Raven.***

Joh. 8.

***His Head is as fine gold.***

He begins to ſet out the excellency of the chiefe part, the Head. The Head of Chriſts is God, as it is 1 *Cor.* 11.3. He is above all, and God only is above him. All is yours, and you are Chriſts and Chriſt is Gods, but that is not much intended here, as to ſhew Chriſts head-ſhip over the Church, as God and Man, his Head is as fine gold, is that, his government and head-ſhip is a moſt ſweet and golden government.

1 Cor. 6. 22. 23

*That a head of gold ſets forth Chriſts government.*

*Daniel* 2. You have an Image of the Monarchies, the firſt whereof had a golden Head, which was the *Chaldean*. The beſt Monarchy is ſet out by the beſt metall, gold: So Chriſt the head of the Church is a precious head, a head of gold.

*Simile.*

A Head hath an eminency above all others, an

SER. XVI.

Act. 17.

an influence and motion above all other parts, it is the ſeat of the ſenſes: ſo this golden head is more eminent then all, governs the whole Church, and hath influence into all; in him we live, and move, and have our being.

*Queſt.* Why Chriſt is ſet out by an head of gold.

*Why is Chriſt as King thus reſembled to an head of gold?*

*Anſw.* Becauſe gold is the chiefe, the moſt precious durable metall of all others. Chriſt is a King for ever, and hath an everlaſting government: Gold is alſo the moſt pliable metall, you may beat it out to leaves more then any other metall whatſoever. Chriſt is all gold indeed, his love hath beat himſelfe out as low as may be, all for our good. What abaſement like to Chriſts? That which is moſt precious is moſt communicating, as the Sun a glorious creature, what doth ſo much good as it? ſo Chriſt as he is the moſt excellent of all, *the chief of ten thouſand,* ſo he is alſo the moſt communicative: what good to the good that Chriſt did? he was beaten out of love to mankind to loweſt abaſement for us; though this be not mainely aimed at here, yet (by the way) ſpeaking of gold, we may preſent to our ſelves ſuch comfortable meditations.

*Uſe* 1. That there is no golden head of the Church but Chriſt.

Well then, is Chriſt ſuch an excellent head, a golden head, in whom are hid all the treaſures of wiſdome to governe his Church? what need we then goe to that triple Crowne, having ſuch a golden head; the Apoſtaſie of the Church hath found out another golden head, is not Chriſt precious enough? Let us take heed of leaving the head Chriſt, as it is *Col.* 2. 1. 9 It is a damnable

thing

thing to forſake him. Let the Apoſtaticall Church alone with her Antichriſt.

Againe, if Chriſt be a golden head, let us his members labour every one to be ſutable, though there be difference between the head and the members in many reſpects, eſpecially in thoſe three formerly named, Eminency, Government, and Influence; yet for nature they are one, head and members make but one: So that as the head of the body is gold, ſo ſhould every member be; therefore the ſeven Churches are ſtiled ſeven golden Candleſticks. Every thing in the Tabernacle was gold, even to the ſnuffers, to ſhew that in the Church every thing is excellent. The Tabernacle was gold moſt of it, though it was covered with Badgers-skins. The Church indeed hath a poore covering, as of Badgers-skins, not guilded as hypocrites, but it is precious within. Againe, Chriſt as he is gold, ſo he is fine gold, whole gold, he hath not only the crowne on him, but his head is gold it ſelf. Other Kings their crownes are of gold, but their heads are not ſo; but there is ſuch a precious treaſure of wiſedome in him, that his head is gold: ſo let the Church and evere Chriſtian labour not to be gilt but gold, to be throughly good, to have the inſide as good as the outſide, the heart as good as the converſation, the Church is glorious within, *Pſa.* 45. Beloved, is Chriſt an excellent golden head, and ſhall he have a baſe body? Is he fit to be united to a golden head that is a common drunkard, a ſwearer, that is a beaſt in his life and converſation, is this ſutable?

2. *We muſt be ſutable to Chriſt our head.*

*Simile.*

Againe, Is our head ſo golden, and whatſoever excellency 3.

SER. XVI.

*To know that all our excellencies come from a golden head.*

Rev. 4. 10.

excellency we have, is it from our head? therefore as the Church in the *Revelation*, let us cast all our crownes at his feet. Have we crowns of gold, any thing that is excellent within, any grace, any comfort? let us lay it downe at his feet, for all is from him. Naturall men have golden Images of their owne, *Israel* would have golden calves, *Nebuchadnezzar* sets up a golden Image, and all must worship it; so in the declining times of the Church, they framed golden Images, that is, a golden, whorish Religion, guilded, and painted, framed by their owne braine, whereunto all must stoop. But the true gold is that we must respect and submit our selves unto and admire, others are but golden dreams and Images (as *Nebuchadnezzars* was;) *Christs head alone is of fine gold.*

Psal 19. 10.

All must be fine gold that comes from this head, his word is gold, sometimes purged in the fire; his ordinances gold, in the Scripture phrase, the City, the new Jerusalem, which signifies the state of the Church in this world, when it shall be refined to the utmost, all is of gold, the wals of precious stones, the gates of pearle, and the pavement of the streets of pure gold, to shew the excellency of reformation, which golden times are yet to come, in the meane time let us goe on and wait for them.

Rev. 21. 21.

Rev. 21. 1.

*His locks are bushie and blacke as a Raven,*

I thinke this is but complementall to fill up the other, it is nothing but a commendation of his freshnesse, a foile to beauty, therefore not particularly to be stood upon.

*His eyes are as doves eys by the rivers of waters,* &c.

His

Ser. XVI.

His eyes are as doves eyes, and ſuch eyes as are by the rivers of waters, where they are cleanſed and waſhed with milke, that they may be the clearer, and fitly ſet, neither gogle eyes, nor ſunk into the head, but fitly ſet, as a jewell in a ring, neither too much in, nor too much out, to ſet out the comelineſſe of this part, the eye, which is the glory of the face.

*Queſt.* Why is Chriſt ſaid to have the eyes of Doves?

*Anſw.* The dove hath many enemies, eſpecially the white dove is a fair marke for the birds of prey, therefore God hath given that creature a quicke ſight, that ſhe might diſcerne her enemies. Thus the Scripture helps us to conceive of the quicknesſe of Chriſts eye. *Rev.* 5. 6. there are ſeven hornes and ſeven eyes, which are the ſeven Spirits of God, here Chriſt the Lambe hath ſeven eyes and ſeven hornes: what be theſe? Chriſt hath not onely hornes of power as the enemies have hornes of violence: he hath horne againſt horne, but ſeven eyes, that is, a quicke ſight to ſee all the danger the Church is in, and ſeven eyes; *ſeven* is a word of perfection, that is, he hath many eyes, and accurate ſight: He hath not onely an eye of providence over the whole world; but an eye of grace and favour, lively and lovely in regard of his Church. All things are naked and open before his eyes, as it is, *Heb.* 4. he can ſee through us, he knowes our very hearts and reines, which he muſt do *ex officio*, becauſe he muſt be our Judge. He that is judge of all, had need to have eyes that will pierce through all. It had need be a quicke eye that muſt judge of the heart and affections; but

SER. XVI.

what may we learne hence, That we have a Saviour that hath doves eyes, that is, cleare eyes, able to discerne.

*Vse 1. All comfort to the Church. Joh. 21.*

Take it as a point first of all comfort to the Church, that when we have any imputation lies upon us, that we are thus and thus, Christ hath quick eyes, he knows our hearts; *thou knowest* (saith *Peter*) *Lord that I love the* in al safe imputation rest in the eye-sight of Christ, he knowes it is otherwise with us.

*Vse 2. It is both comfort and terror.*

Then again in all abasement know, that there is an eye that sees all; he sees with his eye, and pities with his heart: as he hath a quick eye, so he hath a tender heart, though he seems to sleep & to wink, it is but that we may wake him with our prayers; which when we have done, we shall see that Christ hath seen all this while, and that the violence the enemies of God have offered to his Church, the Spouse, hath been in his sight, and that they shall know at length to their cost.

Likewise it is a point of terrour to all hypocrites and others that thinke to blindfold Christ againe. Can they blindfold him in Heaven that hath this sharp eye? No, he sees all their courses and projects, what they are, & what they tend to, & as he sees them, so he will spread them all open ere long.

*Vse 3. Instruction to us all.*

And as it is a point of comfort and terrour, so it is a point of instruction to us all, that wee having to deale with a Judge that sees all, to worship Christ in Spirit. If we had knowledge that such an eye of God is fixed upon us in all places, in all our affections and actions would we give liberty to base and filthy thoughts, to cruell designes, and to treacherous

cherous aimes and intents, to hatch a hell (as it were) in our hearts, and to carry a faire ſhew outwardly? it could not be. Men are not afraid of their thoughts, affections, deſires, and inward delights of the ſoule, becauſe there is no eye of juſtice upon them; but if they did conſider that the All-ſeeing God did obſerve theſe inward evils, and would call them to account one day for them, then they would be as well afraid to thinke ill as to do ill. SER. XVI.

*His cheeks are as beds of ſpices, and as ſweet flowers.*

Cheeks are the grace of the face, they are uſed here to denote the preſence of Chriſt, which is ſweet as ſpices and flowers; not onely his preſence is glorious in Heaven, when we ſhall ſee that goodly perſon of Chriſt that became man for us, that transforming ſight that ſhall make us like himſelfe; but the ſpirituall preſence of Chriſt in his ordinances, which we are capable of here, this is as ſpices and flowers.

But you will ſay, *Cheekes, face, and preſence preſent colours to the eyes; and not ſmiles, as ſpices and flowers which are the peculiar object of another ſenſe.* *Object.*

Oh but Chriſt is the object of all the ſenſes. Beloved, he is not only beauty to the eye, but ſweetneſſe to the ſmell, and to the taſte, therefore faith hath the name of all the ſenſes, to ſee, heare, taſte, and ſmell, and doth all, becauſe it carries us to Chriſt, that is in ſtead of all to us, but the point is: *Anſw.*

*That the manifeſtation of Chriſt to his Church and children by his Spirit in any of his ordinances, is a ſweet manifeſtation, and delectable as ſpices and flowers*, as it is, *Cant.* 1. 3. Becauſe of the ſavour of *Obſerv.*

SER. XVI.

*That all Chriſts ordinances are ſweet and lovely, and wh ſoever proceeds from them.*

thy good oyntments, thy name is as an oyntment powred out, therefore the Virgins love thee. The very name of Chriſt, when he is known and laid open by the miniſtery, is a precious oyntment, and the Virgins, that is, all chaſte ſoules, follow him by the ſmell of his oyntments: all his ordinances convey a ſweetneſſe to the ſoule; his Sacraments are ſweet, his Word ſweet, the communion of Saints ſweet. The preſence of the Sun you know is knowne in the ſpring time by the freſhneſſe of all things, which put forth the life, and little livelyneſſe they have in them; ſome in bloſſoming; and ſome in flowers; that which lay (as it were) dead in Winter, it comes out when the Sunne drawes neare: ſo when Chriſt comes and ſhewes his preſence and face to the ſoule, he refreſheth and delights it.

Hence we ſee they are enemies to Chriſt and to the ſoules of Gods people, that hinder the manifeſtation of Chriſt, whereby his face might be ſeen, and his lovely cheeks diſcerned; thoſe that hate and undermine the ordinances of God, they hinder the comforts of their owne ſoules.

And they are enemies to Chriſt; for when hath Chriſt glory but when the Virgins follow him in the ſent of his ſweet oyntments? when the ſoule in the ſenſe of his ſweetneſſe followes him and cleaves to him with joy, love, and delight, this makes Chriſt Chriſt, and ſets him up in the heart above all others. This is the proper worke of the ordinances. Thoſe therefore that are enemies to the ordinances of Chriſt, are enemies to the ſoules of Gods people, and to the glory and honour

honour of Christ himselfe. Thus far we may goe safely upon comparison of this with other Scriptures. SER. XVII

## The Seventeenth Sermon.

### CANT. V. XIII.

*His lips are like Lillies dropping sweet smelling myrrh, his hands are as gold-rings set with Beryll, his belly is as bright Ivory overlaid with Saphires, his legs,* &c.

IN speaking of these particulars we are to be very wary, for we have not that foundation as we have in other generals; for no doubt but the Spirit of God here did more intend to set out the large affection that the Church had to Christ, than to insinuate any great particularity in every one of these; therefore let us onely cull out, and take those things that are of more easie explication.

*His Lips are as Lillies dropping downe sweet myrrh.*

That is, his doctrine is as sweet as the Lillie, and sound as the myrrh, keeping from putrefaction, it being the nature of myrrh, as it is sound its selfe, so to make other things sound. In like manner the speech of Christ makes the soule sound

Ser. XVII

that embraceth it. What was ever more ſweet than the truth of Chriſt? when he ſpake himſelfe, they all hung upon his lips (as the phraſe is in the Goſpel) as a man hangs upon the lips of another whom he deſires and delights to hear ſpeake, and they marvelled at the gracious words that came out of his lips, *Pſal.* 45. Grace was in his lips, all was ſweet that came from him, for it came from the excellency of his Spirit, his words were died in theſe affections of his heart. In the learned language the ſame word ſignifieth ſpeech and reaſon, to intimate that ſpeech is but the current of reaſon, from the heart the ſeat of reaſon; therefore Chriſts ſpeeches were ſweet, becauſe his heart was ſweet, full of all love, grace, mercy, and goodneſſe; his heart was a treaſure, his lips muſt needs then be ſweet. Beloved, therefore let us hence take a tryall of our ſelves what our condition is, whether the words that come from Chriſt, when he ſpeaks in his Miniſtery to us be ſweet or not.

Mar. 12. 24 35.

The Word to ſome kinde of men is like the Northerne ayre which parcheth and cutteth: *Ahab* could not endure the breath of *Elias*, nor *Herodias* the breath of *John Baptiſt*, nor the *Phariſees* the breath of *Steven* and *Paul*. So too many now adayes cannot endure the breath of divine truth when it cuts and pierceth. Theſe words are arrowes that ſticke; if they ſticke not ſavingly, they ſticke too killing; if we cannot endure Chriſts breath, we are not his Spouſe, nor have any communion with him.

1 Kin 21. Mark 6 16. Act. 22. 22.

*His lips are like lillies dropping ſweet myrrh, &c.*

This is one excellency of Chriſt and of his truth,

truth, that it preſerves the ſoule in a pure eſtate, it is pure it ſelfe, and ſo it preſerves the ſoule. Myrrh is a liquor that keeps from putrefaction: there is nothing that keeps the ſoule but the word that endures for ever, whereas on the other ſide errour is of a putrifying nature, corrupting and defiling the ſoul. SER. XVII

*His hands are as gold rings ſet with Berill*, &c.

Hands are the inſtruments of actions, Chriſts actions are precious, whatſoever he doth to the Church, nay even when he doth uſe evill men to afflict and exerciſe the Church, he hath a hand there, a golden, a precious hand: In the evill hand of wicked men God doth all things by Chriſt, he is as it were Gods hand which all things paſſe through. *Joſeph* was the ſecond man of Egypt, through whoſe hands all things came to the reſt: ſo all things come through Chriſts hands to us, and whatſoever is his handy-worke is good. Even as it ſaid in the dayes of his fleſh, he did all things well: ſo ſtill in the Church all his workmanſhip is exceeding well, though we cannot ſee the excellency of it, it is all well both in the government of the Church, and his workmanſhip in our hearts, the new creature.

*That all Chriſts actions whatſoever are precious.* Heb. 1. Joh. 5. 22.

*His belly is bright Ivory overlaid*, &c.

His belly, that is his inward parts: In the Hebrew it is uſed for the inward affections, they are as bright Ivory overlaid with Saphires, that is, they are pure, all the inſide of Chriſt, all his affections that he beares are wondrous good, his love, his deſires, his ioyes, his hatred, all pure, like pure water in a Cryſtall glaſſe, it may be ſtirred

Ser. XVII

ſometimes, but ſtill it is cleare, there are no dregs at the bottome, becauſe there was no taint of ſin in him.

*His legs are a pillars of marble ſet on ſockets of fine gold*, &c.

*All Chriſts ways are conſtant and firme.* Heb. 13. 8.

That is, all his paſſages and wayes are conſtant and firme even as pillars of marble, his children are ſo likewiſe as farre as they are indued with his Spirit. Chriſt is yeſterday, to day, & the ſame for ever. In regard of his enemies, *Rev.* 1. He is ſet out in another manner of ſimilitude, as having legs of braſſe to trample them all in pieces. But in reſpect of his conſtant truth and wayes of goodneſſe to his Church his legs are as pillars of marble.

*His Countenance is as Lebanon, excellent as the Cedars.*

*Lebanon* was a goodly Forreſt lying on the North ſide of Iudæa, wherein were excellent plants of all kinds, eſpecially Cedars. Chriſt his countenance is as Lebanon, excellent as the Cedars, that is, his preſence is goodly, ſtately & majeſticall, ſo it is and will be when he ſhewes himſelf indeed for the vindicating of his Church, then the enemies thereof ſhall know that his preſence is as Lebanon, and excellent as the Cedars.

*In what regard Chriſtians are like unto Cedars.*

The Children of God are like to Cedars too, for they are Chriſt myſticall. Other men are as ſhrubs to them, men of no value, but they are Cedars, and grow as *Cedars in Lebanon*, from perfection to perfection, bearing moſt fruit in their age. Wicked men ſometimes are Cedars too, and are ſaid to grow and flouriſh as the Cedars in Lebanon: But looke a while and you ſhall ſee their

*How wicked men are ſaid alſo to be Cedars.* Pſal. 37.

place

place no more, they have no good root, no good foundation, *A Chriſtian is a Cedar ſet in Chriſt the chiefe Cedar*, he is a plant that grows in him, he hath an eternall root, and therefore he flouriſheth eternally.

*His mouth is moſt ſweet, he is altogether lovely.*

His mouth is moſt ſweet, ſhe doubles this commendation, ſhe had ſaid before his lips are as Lillies dropping ſweet myrrh, here ſhe ſaith againe of his mouth, it is moſt ſweet, to ſhew that that is the chiefe lovely thing in Chriſt, the repetition argueth the ſeriouſneſſe of the Churches affection to Chriſt, and of the excelleny of that part. The main lovely thing is that which comes from his heart by his words & his lips, as indeed the moſt excellent thing that we can thinke of is the expreſſion of the heart of God in Chriſt, & of Chriſts love to us, *His mouth is moſt ſweet.* And indeed the beſt diſcovery of a true affection to Chriſt, & of a true eſtate in grace, is from our affection to the word of Chriſt. Whereſoever there is intereſt unto Chriſt, there is a high reſpect to the word, *My ſheep hear my voice*, *Ioh.* 10 and you know what *Peter* ſaith, *Ioh. 6.* Many of Chriſts hearers & followers forſooke him (upon ſome hard ſpeeches, as they thought that came from him) ſaith Chriſt to *Peter*, *Will ye alſo love me?* *Peter* anſwered againe, *Whither Lord ſhall we goe? thou haſt the words of eternall life.* The Apoſtles that had the Spirit of God perceived an incredible graciouſneſſe to ſit on his lips, and therefore they hung upon his lips, *Whither ſhall we goe? thou haſt the words of eternall life.* If we leave his ſpeech, we leave our comfort, we leave our life.

*That the words of Chriſt wherein he manifeſts fatherly affliction to us, are of all things moſt ſweet.*

Joh. 6. 68.

As

SER. XVII

As a comment hereupon, ſee *Pſal.* 16. where we have a high commendation of Gods excellency: Firſt from the booke of nature, the works of God, the Heavens declare the glory of God, then from the word of God, and herein the Pſalmiſt is wondrous large. The Law of the Lord is perfect, converting the ſoul, the teſtimonies of the Lord are ſure, making wiſe the ſimple, the ſtatutes of the Lord are right, & reioyce the heart, the commandments of the Lord are ſure, & enlighten the eyes, more to be defired than gold, yea than fine gold, ſweeter alſo than the honey or the honey-comb.

*Queſt.* *When the word of God is precious to us as gold*

But marke the order, when is the word of God precious as gold, ſweeter than the honey or the honey combe, but when the former commendation takes place, where the word is perfect, converting the ſoule, and where it is ſure, making wiſe the ſimple, and where the feare of the Lord is cleane, &c. There it is more to be deſired than fine gold, and ſweeter than the honey-comb. So the Church here finding firſt of all the word to be a converting word, and giving underſtanding to the ſimple, ſhe cannot but ſpeake of the ſweetneſſe of the word of Chriſt; his lips are as Lillies dropping ſweet ſmelling myrrh, his mouth is moſt ſweet. Thus a man may know his eſtate in grace by his reliſh of the word.

*Anſw.*

*That our ſtate in grace may be diſcerned by our reliſh to the word.*

There is a divine and a heavenly reliſh in the word of God, as for inſtance take the doctrine of his providence, *That all things ſhall worke together for the beſt to them that love God.* What a ſweet word is this! a whole kingdom is not worth this promiſe, That whatſoever befals a Chriſtian

Rom. 8.

Christian in this world, there is an over-ruling providence to sway all to good, to helpe forward his eternall good.

*That Christ will be present with us in all conditions, what a sweet word and promise is this? That he will give his holy Spirit, if we beg it that he will not faile us nor forsake us. That if wee confesse our sinnes and lay them open, he is mercifull to forgive them. That if our sinnes were as red as skarlet, they shall all be white as wool.* What kind of incredible sweetnes is in these to a heart that is prepared for these comforts, the doctrine of Reconciliation, of Adoption, of Glory to come, of the offices of Christ, and such like, how sweet are they? they relish wonderously to a sanctified soule.

Mat. 28. Luke 11. 13.

1 Joh. 1. 9.

Isa. 1.

Let us therefore discern of our estate in grace by this, how doe wee relish divine truths? are they connaturall and sutable to us? doe wee love them more than our appointed food? are they dearer unto us than thousands of gold and silver? doe wee like them above all other truths whatsoever? Every truth in its rank is lovely, and is a beame of God: *for truth is of God whereſoever we finde it*: but what are other truths to this heavenly soul-saving truth, this Gospel-truth, that is from Christ? *his mouth is most sweet.*

*Exhortation to try our state in grace by our relish of divine truths.*

Psal. 119. 127. Psal. 119. 117.

In our nature there is a contrary dispositon and Antipathy to divine truth. We *love the Law better than the Gospell, and any truth better than the Law.* Wee love a story, any trifling babling thing concerning our ordinary callings better than divine truth. *In divine truth as things are most spirituall, so the more remote they are naturally from our love and*

*That there is in our nature an Antipathy to divine truths.*

Ser. XVII

*and liking.* Evangelical truths will not downe with a naturall heart, such an one had rather heare a quaint point of some vice or virtue finely stood upon then any thing in Christ, because he was never truly convinced of his corrupt and miserable estate by nature: but when the grace of God hath altered him, and his eyes are open to see his misery, then of all truths the truth of Christ savours best: Those truths that come out of the mouth of Christ, and out of the ministery concerning Christ, they are most sweet of all. Oh how sweet are those words in the Gospel to the poore man, *Thy sinnes are forgiven thee!* doe you thinke they went not to his heart? So to the woman, *Luk. 7.* her many sinnes are forgiven her, for she loved much, Oh they were words that went to her soul! And to the theef on the crosse, *This day thou shalt be with me in Paradise*, how doe you thinke those words affected him? So it is with us, if ever we have been abased in the sense of our sinnes, O how sweet is a promise of mercy then! *He that brings it is as one of ten thousand, that comes to declare to man his righteousnes*, to lay open the mercy that belongs to a distressed soule, Oh the very feet of those that bring these glad tidings are beautiful! When our blessed Saviour after his resurrection spake to *Mary*, and called her by her name, after that she had sought him and could not finde him (Oh *Rabboni!* saith she) the words of Christ they melted her presently. Let Christ once call us by our names, for he knowes us by name, as he knew *Moses*, let him by his Spirit speake to us by name, and owne us, then we call him *Rabboni*, we owne him again, for

Luk. 23.

Job 33. 23.

Rom. 10. 15.

Exod. 34.
Isa. 43. 1.

for what is our love but the reflection of his backe againe? Therefore (ſaith the Pſalmiſt) *Let me heare the voice of joy and gladneſſe, that the bones that thou haſt broken may rejoyce. Let me heare,* that is, I long for thy word to heare it, not the bare miniſteriall word, but the word of the Spirit; but the Church reſteth not here, but ſaith further, Pſal. 51.

*He is altogether lovely.*

Altogether deſirable, as if he ſhould ſay, what ſhould I ſtand upon particulars? he is altogether from top to toe amiable, lovely and delectable.

*He is altogether lovely.*

*That Chriſt every way conſidered is altogether lovely.*

Lovely to God, to us, to the ſoule; lovely to him that can beſt judge of lovelineſſe, the judgement of God I hope will goe currant with us, and what doth God the Father judge of Chriſt? *This is my Beloved Sonne,* he is the Son of Gods love, *Col.* 1.13. (as God cannot but love his own Image.) He is *lovely alſo as man,* for he was pure and holy, lovely as *Mediator* by office, for he was anointed by God to conveigh the Fathers love to us, *He muſt needs be lovely in whom all others are loved,* This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleaſed, out of him I am well pleaſed with no body. And indeed he was filled with all graces that might make him lovely, all the treaſures of wiſedome are in him, and of his fulneſſe we all receive grace for grace, he is made a ſtore-houſe of all that is good for us.

He is lovely to God in whatſoever he did, he carried himſelfe lovely, and pleaſed his Father in all his doings and ſufferings. God loved him eſpecially, *Becauſe he was obedient even unto the death* Phil. 2.

SER. XVII

*death of the croſſe, therefore God gave him a name above all names, that at the name of Ieſus every knee ſhould bow both in Heaven and Earth.* As for the Angels they looke upon him with admiration, they attended him, and accounted it an honour to wait upon him, he is lovely to all above us, and ſhall he not be lovely to us?

*Object.* *But you will ſay, Was he lovely when he was nailed on the croſſe, hung between two theeves, when he wore a crowne of thornes, was whipped, laid groveling on the ground, when he ſweat water and bloud? what lovelineſs was in him when he was laid in his grave?*

*Anſw.* Oh yes, then he was moſt lovely of all to us, *By how much the more he was abaſed for us, this makes him more lovely, that out of love he would abaſe himſelfe ſo low: When greatneſſe and goodneſſe meet together, how goodly is it!* That Chriſt, ſo great a Majeſty, ſhould have ſuch bowels of compaſſion. Majeſty alone is not lovely, but awefull and fearfull, but joyned with ſuch condeſcending grace is wondrous amiable. How lovely a ſight is it to ſee ſo great a perſon to be ſo meeke and gentle! it was ſo beyond compariſon lovely in the eyes of the Diſciples, that they ſtood and wondred to ſee him who was the eternall word of the Father, condeſcend to talke with a poore Samaritan woman: And what lovelineſſe of carriage was in him to *Peter* undeſerving, after he had denied and forſworne him, yet to reſtore him to his former place that he had in his heart, loving him as much as ever he did before. In a word, what ſweetneſſe, gentleneſſe, bowels of meekneſſe, pity, and compaſſion, did he diſcover

to

to thoſe that were in miſery, we cannot inſiſt upon particulars.

There is a remarkable paſſage in the ſtory of *Alphonſus* the King (not very well liked of ſome) when he ſaw a poore man pulling of his beaſt out of a ditch, he put to his hand to help him, after which, as it is recorded, his ſubjects ever loved him the better, it was a wonderfull condeſcending, and is it not as wonderfull that the King of Heaven and Earth ſhould ſtoop ſo low as to helpe us poore wormes out of the ditch of hell and damnation, and that when he hath ſet us in a ſtate of deliverance, he ſhould not leave us there, but advance us to ſuch a ſtate and condition as is above our admiration, which neither heart can conceive, nor tongue expreſſe, is not this wonderfull condeſcending?

*Uſe* 1. *That Chriſt is ſuch a Mediator as can quit his office.*

That we may further improve this point, Is Chriſt altogether lovely, ſo lovely to us, and ſo beloved of God the Father? Let us then reſt upon his obedience and righteouſneſſe, build upon it that God cannot refuſe that righteouſneſſe, whoſe ſubject is altogether lovely. Let us come clothed in the garments of our elder brother, and then doubt not of acceptance; for it is in Chriſt that he loves us, in *this well beloved Son* it is that God is well pleaſed with us: If we put on Chriſts Righteouſneſſe, we put on Gods Righteouſneſſe, and then how can God hate us? no more than he hates his owne Sonne; nay hee loves us, and that with the ſame love wherewith he loves him, for he loves whole Chriſt myſticall, head and members. Let this ſtrengthen our Faith

Joh. 17. 23.

SER. XVII

Faith, that if Christ be so altogether lovely in himselfe and to the Father, then we may comfortably come before the Father, clothed with the garments of him our elder brother, and so rest our selves on the acceptation of his Mediation that is so beloved a Mediator.

*Vse 2.* *To labour to be in Christ, that so we may be lovely before God.*

Againe, if Christ be so lovely (altogether lovely) then let us labour to be in him, that so wee may be lovely to God, because he is the first amiable thing in the world, in whom we are all lovely, all our lovelinesse is in beloved Christ.

*Vse 3.* *To see then how and whereupon to spend our best affections.*

Againe, if Christ be so lovely, here onely we have whereupon to spend the marrow of our best affections. Is it not pity we should lose so much of our affections as we doe upon other things? Christ is altogether lovely, why should we dote upon other things so much, and set up Idols in our hearts above Christ? Is he altogether lovely, and shall not he have altogether our lovely affections, especially when we are commanded under paine of a curse to love the Lord Jesus? *Anathema Maranatha* to those that love not Christ. Let us therefore labour to place all our sweet affections that are to be exercised upon good, as love, joy, and delight, upon this object, this lovely deserving object Christ, *who is altogether lovely.* When we suffer a pure streame as it were to run through a dirty channell, our affections to run after the things of the world, which are worse then our selves, we lose our affections and our selves.

1 Cor. 16, 22.

*The way not to lose our affections.*

Let therefore the whole streame of our affections be carried unto Christ, Love him and whatsoever

whatſoever is his; for he being altogether lovely, all that comes from him is lovely, his promiſes, his directions, his counſels, his children, his Sacraments are all lovely. Whatſoever hath the ſtamp of Chriſt upon it, let us love it, wee cannot beſtow our hearts better to loſe; our ſelves in the love of Chriſt, and to forget our ſelves and the love of all, yea to hate all in compariſon of him, and to account all dung and droſſe compared with Chriſt, is the onely way to finde our ſelves. And indeed wee have a better condition in him than in the world or in our ſelves: ſevered from him, our condition is vaine and will come to nothing; but that wee have in him is admirable and everlaſting, we cannot conceive the happineſſe which wee poore wretches are advanced to in Chriſt, and what excellent things abide for us which come from the love of God to us in Chriſt, who is ſo altogether lovely. Therefore let us labour to kindle in our hearts an affection towards Chriſt, all that we can, conſidering that he is thus lovely. SER. XVII

And let us make an Uſe of Tryall, whether he be thus lovely to us or no, we may ſee hence whether we love Chriſt or no, *Wee may judge of our love by our eſteeme.* How doe wee value Chriſt? what price doth the Church ſet on him? *Hee is the chiefe of ten thouſand.* What place then ſhould he have in our hearts? *If hee be the chiefe of ten thouſand, let us rather offend ten thouſand than offend him.* Let us ſay with *David, whom have I in Heaven but thee*, &c. And when the ſoule can ſay to Chriſt or any

*Vſe 3.*
*Whether or no Chriſt is thus lovely to us.*

*By our eſteeme of Chriſt.*

Pſal. 73.

SER. XVII

that is Chriſts (for I ſpeake of him in the latitude of his Truths, Promiſes, Sacraments, and Communion with his Children) *What have I in Heaven but thee*, &c. then it is in a happy condition. If theſe things have the ſame place in our eſteeme, as they have in reſpect of their own worth, then we may ſay truly without hypocriſie, *He is altogether lovely to us*, that we truly love him.

2. *By our ſufferings.*

In the next place, are we ready to ſuffer for Chriſt? Wee ſee the Church here endures any thing for Chriſt, ſhe was miſuſed of the watchmen, they ſcorned her, and her *vaile* is taken away, yet notwithſtanding ſhe loves Chriſt ſtill. Doe wee ſtand ready diſpoſed to ſuffer for Chriſt, of the world to be diſgraced and cenſured, and yet are wee reſolved not to give over, nay doe wee love Chriſt the more, and ſtick to his truth the faſter: Certainly where the love of Chriſt is, there is a ſpirit of Fortitude, as wee may ſee in the Church here, who is not diſcouraged from Chriſt by any meanes, he is ſtill the chiefe of ten thouſand, when ſhe was wronged for ſeeking after him, yet he was altogether lovely, whereas on the other hand, you have ſome that for frownes of greatneſſe, feare of loſſe, or for hope of riſing, will warpe their conſcience and doe any thing, Where now is love to Chriſt and to Religion? He that loves Chriſt loves him the more for his croſſe, as the Holy-Ghoſt hath recorded of ſome, that they rejoyced that they were thought worthy to ſuffer for Chriſt. So the more wee ſuffer for him, the more deare hee will be to us. For indeed he doth preſent

preſent himſelfe in love and comfort moſt to thoſe that ſuffer for his ſake, therefore their love is increaſed.

3. *Love enlargeth the heart and tongue in the praiſes of Chriſt.*

Againe, where love is, there it enlargeth the heart, which being enlarged enlargeth the tongue alſo. The Church hath never enough of commending Chriſt, and of ſetting out his praiſe, *the tongue is looſed, becauſe the heart is looſed.* Love will alter a mans diſpoſition, as wee ſee in experience, a man baſe of nature, Love will make him liberall; he that is tongue-tied, it will make him eloquent; let a man love Chriſt, and though before he could not ſpeake a word in the commendation of Chriſt, and for a good cauſe, yet (I ſay) if the love of Chriſt bee in him, you ſhall have him ſpeake and labour earneſtly in the praiſes of God. This hot affection, this heavenly fire, will ſo mould and alter him, that he ſhall bee cleane another man, as wee ſee in the Church here, after that there was kindled a ſpirit of love in her, ſhe cannot have done with Chriſt, when ſhe had ſpoke what ſhe could, ſhe adds, *he is altogether lovely.* Thoſe that cannot ſpeake of Chriſt, or for Chriſt with large hearts in defence of good cauſes (but are tongue-tied and cold in their affections) where is their love? Put any worldly man to a worldly theame that he is exerciſed in, and ſpeaks of daily, hee hath wit and words at will, but put him to a theame of piety, you loſe him, hee is out of his theame, and out of his element. But its not ſo with thoſe that have ever felt the love of God in Chriſt, they have large affections:

SER. XVII

How full is Saint *Paul*, he cannot ſpeake of Chriſt but he is in the *height, breadth, length* and *depth* of the love of God in Chriſt, and the knowledge of God above all knowledge: Thus wee may diſcerne the truth of our love by the expreſſions of it here, as in the Church.

4. *True love is never at reſt till ſhe find Chriſt.*

Againe, the Church here is never content till ſhe find Chriſt, whatſoever ſhe had, nothing contents her, ſhe wanted her Beloved, as we ſee here, ſhe goes up and downe inquiſitive after him till ſhe finde him: ſo it is with a Chriſtian, if he have loſt (by his owne fault) his former communion with Chriſt, he will not reſt nor be ſatisfied but ſearcheth here and there in the uſe of this and that meanes, he runs through all Gods Ordinances and meanes till he finde Chriſt, nothing in the world will content him, neither honour, riches, place, or friends, till he finde that which he once enjoyed, but hath now for a ſeaſon loſt, the comfort and aſſurance of Gods love in Chriſt.

*That contentment without heavens ſweet report of comfort to the ſoule, is a dangerous condition.*

Now if we can ſit downe with other things, and can want Chriſt and the aſſurance of ſalvation, that ſweet report of the Spirit, that wee are his, and yet be contented well enough, here is an ill ſigne, that a man is in an ill condition, the Church was not ſo diſpoſed here, ſhe was never quiet, nor gives over her inquiſition and ſpeaking of Chriſt, that by ſpeaking of the object, ſhe might warme her affections, untill at the laſt ſhe meets with Chriſt, theſe and the like ſignes there are of the truth of the love of Chriſt. But where there is a flaming love of Chriſt, there is this degree further, a deſire of

*A ſigne of true flaming love to Chriſt.*

the

the appearance of Christ, a desire of his presence: For if Christ be so lovely in his Ordinances: If we finde such sweetnesse in the Word & Sacraments, in the communion of Saints, in the motions of the Spirit; what is the sweetnesse (thinke you) which the soules in Heaven enjoy, where they see Christ face to face, see him as he is? hereupon the Spouse saith, *Let him kisse me with the kisses of his mouth:* O that I might live in his presence, this is the desire of a Christian soul. When the flame of love is kindled in any strength, O that I might see him, and therefore it longs even for death; for as farre as a man is spirituall, he desires to be dissolved, and to be with Christ, as *Simeon*, when hee saw him (though in his abasement) *Now I have enough, let thy servant depart in peace, for mine eyes have seene thy salvation.* The presence of Christ (though it were but in the wombe) when *Mary* the mother of Christ came to *Elizabeth*, it caused the Babe that was in her wombe to spring. Such comfort there is in the presence of Christ (though he be but in the wombe) as it made *John* to spring. What then shall bee his presence in Heaven, how would it make the heart spring there thinke you? For that which is most lovely in Christ is to come. Therefore the Saints that have any degree of grace in the New Testament, they are set out by this description, they were such as loved the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ: how can it be otherwise if they love Christ, they love the appearing of Christ, wherein wee shall bee made lovely, as he is lovely.

SER. XVII

*That our many infirmities and ſinnes ſhou'd make us long for that time wherein we ſhall be altogether lovely.*

*To try our affections by the Churches affections.*

Here wee are not altogether lovely, for we have many dregs of ſinne, many infirmities and ſtaines, ſhall we not then deſire that time wherein as he is altogether lovely, ſo ſhall wee be made a fit Spouſe for ſo glorious a husband?

To conclude this point, let us try our affections by the Churches affections in this place, whether Chriſt be ſo lovely to us or not, *Iſa.* 50. 3. It is ſaid there is no beauty in him, when wee ſhall ſee him, and he was deſpiſed of men; he was ſo in regard of his croſſe, and ſuffetings to the eye of the world, and of carnall men. *Herod* ſcorned him when *Pilat* ſent him to him, made no body of him (as the word in the Originall is) they looked upon the outſide of Chriſt in the fleſh when he was abaſed. *There was no forme nor beauty in him* (ſaith the Holy-Ghoſt) that is, to the ſight of carnall men; but thoſe that had the ſight of their ſinnes with ſpiritual eyes they could otherwiſe judge of Chriſt. The poore *Centurion* ſaw an excellency in him, when he ſaid, *Hee was not worthy that hee ſhould come under his roofe.* The poore theefe ſaw the excellency of Chriſt upon the Croſſe in thoſe torments, *Lord remember me when thou comeſt into thy Kingdome.*

So thoſe ſoules that were enlightened, that had the ſight of their miſery, and the ſight of Gods love in Chriſt, had a high eſteem of Chriſt in his greateſt abaſement; therefore if wee have a meane eſteeme of the children of God as contemptible perſons, and of the Ordinances of God as meane things, and of the government

government of Christ (such as he hath left in his word) as base, it is an argument of a sinfull unworthy disposition in such a soul, Christ hath never been effectually by his Spirit; for every thing in him is lovely, even the bitterest thing of all. There is a majesty and excellency in all things of Christ, the censures of the Church are excellent, when they proceed and issue forth with judgement, as they should doe, to deliver such a man over to Satan, that hee may be saved in the day of the Lord. SAR. XVII

Now if the Ordinances of Christ, the word and Sacraments, and the shutting sinners out of the Church, if these things be vilified as powerlesse things, it shewes a degenerate wicked heart, not acquainted with the wayes of God. If wee have a meane esteeme of men that suffer for Christ, and stand out for him: If wee account them so and so, shall wee think our selves Christians in the meane time; when Christ is altogether lovely, shall they be unlovely that carry the Image of Christ? Can wee love him that begets, and hate them that are forgotten of him? Can wee love Christ and hate Christians? it cannot be.

*How to get an esteem of Christ.*

Now that wee may get this affection and esteeme of Christ that is so lovely, Let us labour to make our sinns bitter and loathsome, that Christ, may be sweet.

I.

*To make sinne bitter.*

*What is the reason wee set no higher a price of Christ?* *Quest.*

Because wee judge not of our selves, as wee are indeed, and want spirituall eye salve to see into our selves rightly. *Answ.*

SER. XVII
*To attend on the means of salvation.*

*And let us attend upon the meanes of salvation, to heare the unsearchable riches of Christ.* What makes any man lovely to us? but when wee heare of their riches, beauty, and good intent to us. In the Word wee are made acquainted with the good intent of Christ towards us, the riches of mercy in forgiving our sinnes, and riches of glory prepared for us: The more wee heare of him, of his riches and love to us, the more it will inflame our love to Christ. Those that live where the Ordinances of Christ are held forth with life and power, they have more heavenly and enlarged affections than others have, as the experience of Christians will testifie.

3.
*To joyn with such company as highly esteem of Christ.*

Againe, if wee would esteeme highly of Christ that he may be lovely to us, let us joyne with company that highly esteeme of Christ, and such as are better than our selves. What deads the affections so much as carnall, worldly company, who have nothing in them but civility by converse with them who have discourse of nothing but the world: If a man have heavenly affections, he shall quickly dull them, and bee in danger to lose them: they may be conversed with in civill things; but when wee would set to be heavenly, and holy minded, let us converse with those that are of an heavenly bent; as wee see here, *The daughters of Ierusalem* are won to love Christ; by what? By conversing with the Church, upon the discourse that the Church makes of his excellencies in particular, they begin to aske where is Christ? as in the next Chapter, and so are all brought to the love of Christ.

THE

# The Eighteenth Sermon.

## Cant. V. XVI.

*His mouth is moſt ſweet, yea he is altogether lovely, this is my Beloved, and this is my friend, O daughters of Jeruſalem.*

## Cant. VI. I, II.

*Whither is thy Beloved gone, O thou faireſt among women, whither is thy Beloved turned aſide that we may ſeek him with thee?*
*My Beloved is gone down, &c.*

BY this time the Church hath well quit her ſelf in that ſafe ſubject, commending her Beloved, firſt in generall, and then in particular; ſhe affirmes (in effect) there was none like him in general, which ſhe after makes good in all the particulars of her deſcription, now ſhe ſummes up all with a kinde of ſuperabundant expreſſion, *What ſhall I ſay more of him? if that which is ſaid be not enough, then know further, he is altogether lovely, there were no end to go through all his perfections, but look on him wholly, he is altogether lovely, and therefore deſerves my love; ſo that there is no cauſe why you ſhould wonder at the ſtrength*

Se. XVIII.

*ſtrength of my affections, and care to finde out this my Beloved and this my friend, O ye daughters of Ieruſalem.* Thus we ſee how the pitch of an enlightened ſoule is bent, it aſpires to things ſutable to its ſelfe, to God-ward, to union and communion with Chriſt, to ſupernaturall objects, nothing here below is worthy the name of its beloved. It faſtens not on earthly baſe things, but this is my beloved, and this is my friend, this ſo excellent a perſon, this *Jedidiah*, this beloved ſonne, this Judge of all, Lord of all, this chiefe of ten thouſand; Here the Church pitches her affections, which ſhe conceales not as aſhamed thereof, but in a kinde of triumphiug, boaſting of her choice, ſhe concludes all with a kinde of reſolute aſſurance, that the object of this her choice is far beyond all compariſon.

*This is my Beloved, and this is my friend, O daughters of Ieruſalem.*

Which is the cloſing up of her commendations of Chriſt, *This is my beloved, and this is my friend*, &c. Which ſhall onely be touched, becauſe we had occaſion to ſpeake thereof before. She calls Chriſt her beloved, howſoever he had withdrawne himſelfe in regard of the comfort and communion ſhe had with him before, *yet he is her beloved ſtill.*

That which is ſpecially to be ſtood upon is, that the Church here doth ſet out not only in parcels, but in generall her beloved Chriſt: this is my Beloved, ſhee doth as it were boaſt in her Beloved: whence obſerve, *A Chriſtian ſoul ſeemes to glory as it were in Chriſt.*

This

*This is my Beloved, and this is my friend, O ye daughters of Jeruſalem:* But to unfould more fully this point, there be three or foure ends why the Church thus ſtands upon the expreſſing of the excellencies of Chriſt in particular and in generall.

Sect. XVIII.

*Divers ends why the Church thus in generall and particular ſets forth the excellency of Chriſt.*

The one, *To ſhew that it is moſt juſt that ſhe ſhould love and reſpect him in whom there is all this to deſerve love, both in himſelf in regard of his own excellencies, ſo, and in relation to us, in regard of his merits and deſerts.*

1. *To ſhew how juſt it is to reſpect ſo excellent a perſon.*

Secondly, *To juſtifie her large affections before the world and all oppoſites*: For the world thinks, what meane theſe who are called Chriſtians to haunt the exerciſes of Religion, to ſpend ſo much time in good things, they wonder at it for want of better information; Now the Church here to juſtifie her large expreſſions, ſayes, *this is my Beloved, this is my friend, O ye daughters of Jeruſalem.*

2. *To juſtifie her ſtrong affection to the ſtronger Chriſtians.*

And not only to juſtifie, but likewiſe to glory therein, as you have it, *Pſal.* 44. 8. the Church there boaſt of God, *I will make my boaſts of thee all the day long.* So that Chriſtians may not onely juſtifie their courſe of life againſt enemies, but in ſome ſort boaſt of Chriſt, as *Paul* oft doth, and he ſhewes the reaſon of it: that God hath made Chriſt to us all in all, wiſdom, righteouſneſſe, ſanctification, and redemption, that whoſoever glorieth might glory in the Lord; for is it not a matter of glorying in the Church, when ſhe hath ſuch a head and ſuch a husband? *This is my Beloved*; the wife ſhines in the beames of her husband, therefore this yeelds matter, not onely of juſtification, but of glory.

3. *To boaſt and glory in God.*

And

Sect. XVIII. 4.

*To enlarge her own affections.*

*That love is wages to it ſelf.*

And next in the fourth place, the Church is thus large, and ſhuts up all with a repetition, this is my beloved, *to enlarge her own affections, and to feed her owne love.* For love feeds upon this fuell (as it were) upon expreſſions and meditations of the perſon or thing loved. Love is as it were wages of it ſelfe, the paines it takes is gaine to it ſelfe, to the Church herein it is an argument pleaſing, ſhe dilates upon a copious Theame. I may truly ſay there is no greater comfort to a Chriſtian, nor a readier way to enlarge the affections after Chriſt, than to ſpeake oft of the excellencies of Chriſt, to have his tongue as the pen of a ready writer furniſhed this way. *This is my Beloved*, &c.

*To aggravate her own ſhame and unkindneſſe in ſo ſleighting Chriſts love.*

In the fifth place, another end of this may be *to aggravate her owne ſhame*, as indeed Gods children are much in this argument, that upon their ſecond thoughts of Chriſts worthineſſe, and therewithall reflecting upon their owne unworthineſſe and unkindeneſſe they may reliſh Chriſt the better. Therefore the Church here that it might appeare to her ſelfe for her humiliation how unkinde ſhe had bin to ſhut the doore againſt Chriſt when he knocked, whereupon he deſervedly did withdraw himſelfe and made her ſeek him ſo long ſorrowing. I tell you ſayes ſhe what a kinde of beloved he is, thus and thus excellent. How did the conſideration of Gods kindeneſſe and love melt *Davids* heart after that horrible ſinne in the matter of *Uriah*, and the ſweet looks of Chriſt upon *Peter*, that had been ſo unkinde, melted him? So here the Church when ſhe conſidered how unkinde ſhe had been to Chriſt her beloved

beloved, ſo incomparably excellent above other beloveds, to let him ſtand at the doore, till his lockes were wet with the dew of the night. The conſideration hereof made her aſhamed of her ſelfe: What ſo excellent, ſo deſerving a perſon as my beloved is to me, to be uſed of me ſo? what indignity is this? Thus to raiſe up the aggravation of her unkindeneſſe, no queſtion but the Church takes this courſe; for Gods children are not as untoward wordlings and hypocrites, afraid to ſearch and to underſtand themſelves, the childe of God loves to be well read in his owne heart and unworthy wayes; therefore he layes all the blame he can upon himſelfe every way, he knowes he loſeth nothing by this; for there is more mercy in Chriſt than there is ſinne in him, and the more ſinne abounds in his owne feeling, the more grace ſhall abound, he knowes the myſtery of Gods carriage in this kinde. Therefore for this end (amongſt the reſt) ſhe ſayes, *This is my Beloved, and this is my friend*, whom I have ſo unkindely uſed.

*To winde up the affections of the new beginning Chriſtians.*

And the laſt reaſon why the Church is thus large was, *To draw & wind up the affections of thoſe well meaning Chriſtians that were commers on, who were inquiſitive of the way to Zion. Oye daughters of Jeruſalem*, that you may know that there is ſome cauſe to ſeeke after Chriſt more than you have done before: I tell you what an excellent perſon my beloved is, to whet their affections more and more: And wee ſee the ſucceſſe of this excellent diſcourſe in the beginning of the next Chapter, *Whither is thy Beloved gone*, &c.

There

SER. XVIII

These and the like reasons there are of the large expressions of the Church, of the excellencies of Christ, *This is my Beloved, and this is my friend, O ye daughters of Jerusalem.* But we will single out of these reasons for Use that which I thinke fittest for us to make use of.

Let us then oft thinke of the excellencies of Christ for this end, to justifie our endeavours and paines we take in the exercises of Religion, and to justifie Gods people from the false imputations of the world that they lay upon them; as if they were negligent in other matters, and were too much busied in spirituall things. You see how large the Church is in setting out the excellencies of her Beloved, and then she shuts up all (being able to say no more) justifying our cause, *This is my Beloved, & this is my friend.* Do you wonder that I seeke so much after him then? or wonder you at Christians, when they take such paines to keep their communion with Christ in a holy walking with, and depending upon God? These are no wonders, if you consider how excellent Christ is, what he hath done for us, and what he keeps for us in another world, that he will preserve us to his heavenly kingdome, till he put us into possession of that glorious condition that he hath purchased. Let the hearts of men dwell upon the consideration of these things, and then you shall see that Gods children are rather to be blamed that they are no more carefull, watchfull, and industrous, than to be taxed that they are so much. Our Saviour Christ said, *Mat.* 11. 19. Wisdome is justified of all her children.

Mat. 11. 19

If

SER. XVII

If you will make good that you are children of wiſedome, you muſt be able to juſtifie the wiſedome of God every way, to juſtifie your reading, hearing, your communion of Saints, to juſtifie all the exerciſes of Religion from an experimentall taſte and ſweetneſſe of them (as the Church doth here) *This is my Beloved.* What ſayes *Joſhua*, this choice I have made, doe you what you will, it matters me not, but *I and my houſe will ſerve the Lord.* So *Paul* makes a voluntary profeſſion of his affection, *Rom.* 1. 2. *I am not aſhamed of the Goſpell of Ieſus Chriſt*, let the Goſpell be entertained in the world as it will, and let others thinke of me as they will, that I am forward in the preaching of it, I am not aſhamed of it, and good reaſon he had not to be aſhamed, for *it is the power of God to ſalvation to all that beleeve*, yea the ſaving power to us, and have not I cauſe to ſtand in the defence of it? and ſo he ſaith in 2 *Tim.* 1 12. *I know whom I have beleeved*, &c. I am not aſhamed to ſuffer bonds for his ſake. Though the world thought him a meane perſon, I will not be ſcorned out of my Faith and Religion by ſhallow empty perſons, that know not what Chriſt and Religion meaneth. No, *I know whom I have beleeved, he is able to keep that that I have committed to him againſt that day.* Let us therefore be able to juſtifie from a judicious apprehenſion ſweet divine truths. You ſee what juſtifications there are of the Church of God: *Wherefore ſhould the Heathen ſay, where is now their God?* and *Pſalme* 42. 10. Oh it went to *Davids* heart, when they ſaid, where is now their God? what is become

Joſh. 24. 15.

2 Tim. 1. 12.

Ser. XVIII

come of his God when he was left in trouble, as the Church here, and what doth she answer? doth he let it goe with a Question? No, sayes he, our God is in Heaven, and hath done whatsoever he pleased.

Psal. 113. 2.

*The justification of religious endeavours is with desertion of opposite courses.*

And this justification of Religion you may know by this signe, it is with the desertion of all courses opposite to Religion whatsoever, he that justifies the truth, he esteems meanly of other courses & discourses. Therefore in the next verse the Church vilifies the Idols, our God is in Heaven, and doth whatsoever he pleaseth: the Idols are silver and gold, the worke of mens hands: they have eyes and see not, eares and heare not. And the more we justifie Christ, the more we will be against Antichrist and his Religion, we may know the owning of the one truth by the vilifying the other. Let us labour therefore to grow to such a convincing knowledge of Christ, the good things in him, and the wayes of God, as we may be able to stand out against all opposition of the gates of hell whatsoever.

*To grow to know Christ more, and his good things, we must grow in admiration of him.*

And to this end proceed in the study of Christ and to a deeper search of him, and of the excellencies and good things in him, that we may say as *Micah* 7. Who is a God like to thee, that pardons sins and iniquities? And as *David*, *Psal.* 113. Who is a God like our God that humbleth himselfe to behold the things done here below?

*We must pray for the Spirit of Revelation.*

And desire also to this purpose the Spirit of revelation, that which *Paul* prayes for, *Ephes.* 1. and *Cap.* 3. that we may know that knowledge that is above all knowledge, the height, depth

and

Se. XVIII.

and breadth of Gods love in Chriſt. So ſweet is God in the greateſt abaſements of his children, that he leaves ſuch a taſte in the ſoul of a Chriſtian, that from thence he may be able to ſay, this is my Beloved, when his beloved ſeems not to care for him. When the Church ſeemed to be diſreſpected and neglected of Chriſt, yet ſhe ſayes, *This is my beloved, and this is my friend, O ye daughters of Ieruſalem.*

Shall rich men boaſt of their riches? ſhall men that are in favour boaſt of the favour of great perſons? ſhall a man that hath large poſſeſſions boaſt and thinke himſelfe as good and as great as his eſtate is? ſhall a baſe minded worlding be able to boaſt? Why boaſteſt thou thy ſelfe, Oh mighty man? Nay you ſhall have malignant ſpirited men boaſt of their malignant deſtructive power, I can doe this and that miſchiefe, ſhall a man boaſt of miſchiefe that he is able to doe miſchiefe? and hath not a Chriſtian more cauſe to boaſt in God and in ſalvation? Lord ſhine on me, ſayes *David*, let me enjoy the light of thy countenance, and that ſhall bring me more joy than they have, when their corne and wine increaſeth: know this as he goes on in the ſame pſalme, that God accepts the righteous man.

*That if worldly and wicked men boaſt of earthly things, much more ought we of our portion in Chriſt.*

Pſal. 52. 1.

Pſal. 4. 7.

Therefore let us thinke we have much more cauſe to boaſt of God and of Chriſt in a ſpirituall manner, than the worldling hath of the world, Is not God and Chriſt our portion? and having Chriſt, have we not all things with Chriſt? put caſe all things be tooke from us, if a man have Chriſt, he is rich though he have nothing elſe; if

*That Chriſt reconciled is the beſt portion.*

Ser. XVIII

he have all without him, His plenty is (as a Father ſaith, and as it is in truth) beggery. But whoſoever hath Chriſt, may thus rejoyce with *David*, *The lot is fallen to me in pleaſant places, yea I have a goodly heritage.* Would ye have more then God in Chriſt, a Ring with a Diamond very precious in it? Now the *Daughters of Jeruſalem* hearing this large expreſſion of affection, aske,

Pſal. 16 7.

## Chap. VI. I.

*Whither is thy Beloved gone, O thou faireſt among women? whither is thy Beloved turned aſide, that we may ſeeke him with thee?*

HEre is another Queſtion, the firſt which the *Daughters of Ieruſalem* aske, is, *what is thy Beloved?* Whereupon the Church tooke occaſion to expreſſe what her beloved was upon her expreſſion, cloſing up all with this generall, *This is my Beloved, and this is my freind.*

*That a diſcovery of Chriſts excellency muſt needs ſet us a worke how to have him.*

Then the ſecond Queſtion is, *Whither is thy beloved, gone?* One queſtion begets another, and indeed if this queſtion be well ſatisfied what is Chriſt above others, this will follow againe, where is he? how ſhall I get him? how ſhall I ſeeke him? what is the reaſon this ſecond queſtion is ſeldome made? *Whither is he gone? how ſhall I get Chriſt?* Becauſe the former queſtion, namely, *What is Chriſt?* is ſo ſeldome made: For if we did once know what Chriſt is, we would be ſure with the *daughters of Jeruſalem* to aske whither is he gone, that we may ſeek him with thee.

We

We see here is a growth in the desires of the *Daughters of Jerusalem*, whence we learn,

*That grace, though it be in never so little proportion at the first, it is growing still.*

Sa. XVIII. *Observ.* *That grace, begets grace, the flame once kindled will not out but be aburning and growing.*

From the first question, *What is thy Beloved?* Here is a second (upon better information) *Whither is thy Beloved gone, that we may seeke him with thee?* Nothing is lesse then grace at the first, nothing in the world so little in proportion. The Kingdome of Heaven is compared to a graine of mustard-seed, that is, the worke of grace in the heart, as well as in the preaching of the Gospell, in the beginning is little. It is true of the worke of grace, as well as of the word of grace, that it is like a graine of mustard-seed at first, *What is thy Beloved* enquires the Church at first; but when she heares of the excellency of Christ, then *whither is thy Beloved gone?* Grace begets grace, there is a connexion and knitting together in Religion, good things beget good things: It is a strange thing in Religion, how great a matter ariseth of a little beginning. The woman of *Samaria* had but a small beginning of grace, and yet she presently drew many of her neighbours to beleeve in Christ. So *Andrew*, *John* 1. As soone as he was converted he findes his brother *Simon*, and tels him that he had found the *Messias*, and so brings him to Christ; and *Philip* as soon as he had got a sparke of Faith himselfe, hee drawes also *Nathaniel* to come to Christ. *Paul* speaks of his bonds, how the noise of them was in *Cæsars* Court, and many beleeved the very report, which howsoever it is not a working cause,

Mat. 13.

Phil. 1. 13.

Se. XVIII

yet it may be a preparing, inducing, leading cauſe to ſuch things, from one thing to another, till there follow this change and full converſion. You ſee here the *daughters of Jeruſalem* growing; therefore let us labour to be under good meanes.

*An error of the Papiſts touching the efficacy of grace in congruity.*

Some of the Romiſts and others which are ill affected and grounded in that point, they thinke that the efficacy of grace is, as we call it, from the congruity, fitneſſe, and proportion of the meanes to the heart and will of man, and thereupon God converts one and not another, becauſe there is a congruous and fit offering of meanes to him, when he is fitly diſpoſed, and another is not fitly diſpoſed; therefore there followes not upon it effectuall calling, ſo that the vertue of the meanes offered depends upon ſutableneſſe and fitneſſe in the party to whom the meanes are offered, and not upon the power and bleſſing of God, verily this is plauſible, and goes downe very roundly with many weake perſons; but this is a falſe and a groſſe errour; for unleſſe God by his holy Spirit doe worke by the meanes, no planting and watering will bring any increaſe, and change the heart and minde: though there were greater meanes in Chriſts time, when he wrought theſe miracles than any time before, yet all thoſe could not convert that froward generation: And it was *Moſes* complaint in the wilderneſſe, where they had abundance of meanes, God hath not given you a heart to perceive, and eyes to ſee, and eares to heare untill this day. When a man is planted under good means, and frequents them, then ordinarily it pleaſeth God by the inward

*That the means without a diſtinct conſiſting work can do nothing.*

Deut. 29. 4.

*That uſually God works with the means.*

workings

Se.XVII.

workings of his owne powerfull Spirit to worke great matters; and thoſe that keepe out of Gods reach, that will not come into places where they may heare good things, there is no hope of them, though there be many ill fiſh in the net, yet there is no hope to catch them that are without the net. So thoſe that are kept out of all opportunities and occaſions whereby Gods Spirit may worke upon them, there is no hope of them.

Let us learne this heavenly wiſdome to advantage our ſelves this way, by improving all good opportunities whatſoever whereby wee may learne, for God workes by outward meanes: good company, and good diſcourſe, theſe breed excellent thoughts. As therefore we love our ſoules, take all advantages wherein the Spirit of God workes, we ſhall finde incredible fruit thereof, more than we would beleeve. But to come to the Queſtion.

See here firſt of all in this Queſtion, the bleſſed ſucceſſe of the Churches enquiry after Chriſt in the *daughters of Jeruſalem*, after they heard the large explications of the excellencies of Chriſt, eſpecially by the Church, whom they had a good conceit of, for they call her, *the fairest among women.*

*That demonſtrative affectionate confident explication of Chriſt, is never without wondrous ſucceſſe.*

And ſeeing likewiſe the confidence of the Church, ſhe ſtands to it, *this is my Beloved*, yea alſo eagerneſſe in the Church to ſeeke after him, they would ſeeke him with her, ſo that where theſe meet, a large unfolding of the truth of God, and that by perſons that are knowne to be good, well accepted and conceited of, and

Se. XVIII. where there is a large demonſtration of reall affection, and the things are ſpoken of with confidence, as knowing what they ſay, the word (I ſay) ſo managed, it is never without wondrous ſucceſs.

1. For in the courſe of reaſon, what can I have to ſay, conſidering the perſon who ſpeaks is an excellent perſon, he is wiſer and holier than I, he takes to heart theſe things, and ſhall not I affect that which thoſe that have better parts and graces do?

2. Then withall I ſee not only excellent perſons do it, but I ſee how earneſt they are, ſurely there is ſome matter in it; for perſons ſo holy, ſo wiſe, and gracious to be ſo earneſt, ſurely either they are too blame, or I am too dull and too dead, but I have moſt cauſe to ſuſpect my ſelfe.

3. And to ſee them carried with a ſpirit of confidence, as if they were well enough adviſed when they deliver this (*this is my Beloved*) in particular, and then to ſhut up all in generall, *This is my Beloved, and this is my friend*: I ſay, when there is grace and life in the heart, and earneſtneſſe with confidence, this together with the explication of the heavenly excellencies of Chriſt, and of Religion, it hath admirable ſucceſſe, as here in the Church, *the faireſt among women, the daughters of Ieruſalem*, ſeeing the Church was ſo earneſt, confident, and ſo large in the explication of the excellencies of Chriſt, ſee how it works, it drawes out this Queſtion with reſolution, they joyne with the Church in ſeeking Chriſt. *Whither is thy Beloved gone, O thou faireſt among women? whither is thy Beloved turned aſide, that we may ſeeke him with thee?* Where by the way obſerve

ſerve, as the Church before doubles it, *This is my Beloved, and this is my friend:* ſo they anſwer with a double queſtion, *Whither is thy Beloved gone? whither is he turned aſide, O thou faireſt among women,* &c. From this appellation note, If we would be happy inſtruments to convert others, being converted our ſelves, *labour to be ſuch as the world may thinke to be good and gracious. O thou faireſt among women*: Faire in the robes of Chriſt tooke out of his wardrobe: all the beauty and ornaments that the Church hath, ſhe hath from Chriſt, let us labour to be ſuch as the world may conceit are good perſons. We ſay of Phyſitians, when the patient hath a good conceit of them, the cure is halfe wrought: So the Doctrine is half perſwaded, when there is a good conceit of the ſpeaker.

SER. XVII.

*How to be happy inſtruments to convert others.*

*To be ſuch as the world may thinke to bee good and gracious.*

Againe, labour to be earneſt. If wee would kindle others, we muſt be warmed our ſelves: If we would make others weep, we muſt weep our ſelves. Naturaliſts could obſerve this, the Church ſpake this with large expreſſions, indeed more than can be expreſt. Let us labour to be deeply affected with what we ſpeake, and ſpeake with confidence, as if we knew what we ſpake, as the Apoſtle *Iohn* doth in the beginning of his Epiſtle to bring others to be better perſwaded of his Doctrine: He affirmeth that which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have ſeen with theſe our eyes, which we have looked upon, and theſe hands of ours have handled of the Word of Life he delivered to them.

*To be earneſt in thoſe things we would inſiſt upon others.*

1 Joh. 1. 1.

For when we are confident from ſpirituall experience, it is wonderfull how we ſhall be inſtru-

Se. XVIII.

1 Pet. 1. 16.

ments of God to gaine upon others. So *Peter*, we followed not (ſayes he) deceivable fables, when we opened unto you the power and comming of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, but with our eyes we ſaw his Majeſty.

Doe not thinke it belongs onely to the Miniſtery, there is an art of Converſion that belongs to every one that is a growne Chriſtian to win others.

*Whither is thy Beloved gone, O thou faireſt among women?*

The next obſervation out of the words (becauſe it is the especiall) which workes upon the *daughters of Ieruſalem*, is from the large explication of Chriſt.

*Obſerv.*

*That which moſt of all ſtirs up holy affections to ſearch after Chriſt is the large explication of his excellencies.*

*That we ought to be in love with the miniſtery of the word, whereby the excellency of Chriſt is ſet forth.*

Pro. 10. 20.

Then be in love with the Miniſtery of the Goſpell, and the Communion of Saints, who have their tongues and their hearts taught of God to ſpeake excellently, their tongues are as refined ſilver, their hearts are enriched to increaſe the communion of Saints. Marke this one excellency of that excellent ordinance of God in Chriſt, whereof *Paul* ſaith, *Epheſ.* 3. *To me is committed this excellent office to lay open the unſearchable riches of Chriſt*, ſuch riches as may draw you to wonder, ſuch as eye hath never ſeene, nor eare heard, nor hath entred into the heart of man to conceive, and ſo to draw the affections of people after them.

2 Cor. 5.

And becauſe it is the ſpeciall office of the Miniſtery

niſtery to lay him open, to hold up the tapiſtry, to unfold the hidden myſteries of Chriſt; labour we therefore to be alway ſpeaking ſomewhat about Chriſt or tending that way, when we ſpeak of the Law, let it drive us to Chriſt, when of Morall duties, to teach us to walke worthy of Chriſt. Chriſt or ſomwhat tending to Chriſt ſhould be our theame and marke to ayme at.

Sa. XVIII. *That becouſe the ſpeciall office of the miniſtery is to unfold Chriſt, therefore all our diſcourſe ſhould tend this way in ſome ſort.*

Therefore what ſhall wee judge of thoſe that are hinderers of this glorious ordinance of Chriſt in the Goſpell? they are enemies of converſion, and of the calling of Gods people, enemies of their comfort: and what ſhall wee thinke of thoſe wretched and miſerable creatures, that like *Cain* are vagabonds, who wander and will not ſubmit themſelves to any ordinance meekly, but keep themſelves out of this bleſſed opportunity of hearing the excellencies of Chriſt, which might draw their hearts to him? wee are made for ever, if Chriſt and wee be one; if wee have all the world without him, it is nothing; if wee have nothing in the world but Chriſt, wee are happy. Oh happy then when this match is made between Chriſt and the ſoul, the friends of the Bride and of Chriſt, they laying open the unſearchable riches of Chriſt to the Spouſe, draw the affections, work faith, and ſo bring the Bride and the Bridegroome together.

Thus farre of the Queſtion, now wee have the Churches anſwer to the *daughters of Ieruſalem.*

*My Beloved is gone into his Garden, to the beds of Spices, to feed in the Gardens, and to gather Lillies.*

The

S. XVIII

The Queſtion was not for a bare ſatisfaction, but from a deſire the Church had to ſeek Chriſt, whither is thy beloved gone that we may ſeeke him? It was not a curious queſtion but a queſtion of inquiſition tending to practiſe. Many are inquiſitive, but when they know another mans meaning, it is all they deſire: now I know your meaning will they ſay, but I meane not to follow your counſell. The *daughters of Ieruſalem* had a more ſincere intention, *O thou faireſt among women, whither is thy Beloved turned aſide, that we may ſeeke him with thee?* Whereunto the Church anſwered.

*My Beloved is gone into his Garden, to the beds of ſpices, to fe de in the Gardens.* Where we ſee,

*That there ought to be no envy in ſpirituall things, which may in ſolidum be divided alike to all.*

The Church is not ſquemiſh, but directly anſwers to the queſtion, for there is no envy in ſpirituall things, becauſe they may be divided *in ſolidum*, one may have as much as another, and all alike. Envy is not in thoſe things that are not diviſible; in other things, the more one hath, another hath the leſſe. But there is no envy in grace and glory, becauſe all may ſhare alike; therefore here is no envy in the anſwer; as if ſhe denied the *daughters of Ieruſalem* the enjoying of her beloved; no if you will know (ſayes ſhe) I will tell you directly whither my beloved is gone.

*My Beloved is gone into his Garden, to the beds of ſpices*, &c.

God hath two gardens, the Church Catholike is his garden, and every particular Church are gardens and beds of ſpices, in regard that many Chriſtians are ſowne there that Chriſts ſoul

Sr. XVIII.

ſoul delights in, as in ſweet ſpices. This was ſpoken of before at large in *Chapter* 5. 1. why the Church is called a garden, being a ſevered place from the waſte: the Church is ſevered from the wilderneſſe of the world in Gods care and love, likewiſe hee tends and weeds his Church and garden: as for the waſte of the world he is content the wilderneſſe ſhould have barren plants: but hee will not endure ſuch in his garden; therefore thoſe that give themſelves liberty to be naught in the Church of God, hee will have a time to root them out: Trees that are not for fruit, ſhall be for the fire, and above all other Trees their doome ſhall bee the heavieſt that grow in Gods garden without fruit, that fig-tree ſhall be curſed. Luk. 13.

Men are pleaſed with anſwering the bill of accuſation againſt them thus, Are we not baptized? and doe we not come to Church? &c. what doe you make of us? yet they are abominable ſwearers and filthy in their lives. To ſuch I ſay, the more God hath lift you up and honoured you in the uſe of the meanes, the more juſt ſhall your damnation be, that you bring forth nothing but briers and brambles, the grapes of *Sodome*, and the vine of *Gomorrah*: heavy will the doome bee of many that live in the Churches boſome, to whom it had been better to have been borne in *America*, in *Turkey*, or in the moſt barbarous parts in the world: they have a heavy account to make that have beene ſuch ill proficients under abundance of meanes, therefore it ought to be taken to heart.

*The folly and madneſſe of ſuch who plead they are ſpices and plants of Gods garden whileſt they live in all prophaneneſſe.*

Heb. 6. Deut. 31. 32.

*My*

Se. XVIII

*That Christ looks for Lillies to plant them in his garden, delight in them, and transport them into Heaven.*

*Two paradises*

*My Beloved is gone into his garden to the beds of spices, to feed in the Gardens, and togather Lillies.*

That is, having first planted them *Lillies* here, to gather them, and to transport them out of the garden here, to the garden in Heaven, where there shall be nothing but lillies. For the Church of God hath two Gardens or Paradises since the first Paradise (whereof that was a resemblance) the Paradise of the Church, and the Paradise of Heaven. As Christ saith to the good theefe, *this day thou shalt be with me in Paradise*: So those that are good plants in the Paradise of the Church, they shall be glorious plants also in the Paradise of Heaven. Wee must not alway be here, we shall change our soyle, and be taken into Heaven: *Hee is gone into his Garden to gather Lillies.*

I.

*In what respects Christians are compared to Lillies for purity, whitenesse, and unspottednesse.*

*Christians are compared to Lillies* for their purity and whitenesse, unspotted in justification, and for their endeavours in sanctity and holinesse, wherein also at length they shall be wholly unspotted, it is the end (*Ephes.* 1. 4. they are chosen to, to be holy without blame before him in love. God and Christ looks upon them without blame, not as they are here defiled and spotted but as they intend by little and little to purge and purifie themselves by the Spirit that is in them, that they may be altogether without blame. They are Lillies being clothed with the white garments of Christs righteousnesse, not having a naturall whitenesse and purity: the whitenesse and purity of Gods children is borrowed, all their beauty and garments are taken out of anothers wardrobe, the *Church is all glori-*

*ous*

Sr. XVIII.

*ous within?* but ſhe borrowes her glory, as the Moone borrowes all her light from the Sun: the Churches excellency is borrowed, it is her owne but by gift, but being once her owne, it is her owne for ever.

The Church before was likened to a garden culled out, and *Eden*, a Paradiſe: Now there you know were four ſtreames, ſweet and goodly rivers which watered Paradiſe, the heads of which rivers were without it. So the Church of God, her graces are her owne, that is, the Spirit of God comes through her nature, purgeth and purifieth it? but the ſpring of thoſe graces (as in Paradiſe) is out of her ſelfe.

2. *Becauſe it is a tall goodly plant.*

And then the Lilly is a tall goodly plant, therefore the Church compared to them. Other men are compared to thornes, not onely for a noxious, hurtfull quality in them, but for their baſeneſſe likewiſe: What are thornes good for, but to comber the ground, to eat out the heart of it, to hide ſnakes, and for the fire? Wicked men are not Lillies but thornes, they are baſe meane perſons. *Antiochus* is ſaid to be a vile perſon though he were a King, becauſe he was a naughty man. Wicked men though they bee never ſo great, being void of the grace of God, are vile perſons: though wee muſt reſpect them in regard of their places; yet as they are in their qualification, they are vile and baſe thornes; but the Church is not ſo, but as a Lilly among thornes, that is, among vile and abominable perſons. Dan. 11. 21.

*Uſe* 1. *Comfort Gods children.*

The Uſe is to comfort Gods children, they have an excellency and glory in them, which how-

Sect. XVIII. howsoever it is not from them, yet it is theirs by gift, and eternally theirs; therefore let them comfort themselves against all the censures of sinfull persons, that labour to trample them under foot, and thinke basely and meanly of them, as of the off scowring of the world. Let the unworthy world thinke of them as they will, they are Lillies in Gods esteeme, and are so indeed, glorious persons that have the Spirit of glory resting upon them, and whom the world is not worthy of, though their glory bee within; therefore let us glory in it, that God vouchsafeth saving grace to us above any other privilege.

1 Pet. 4. Heb. 11.

*Use* 2. Againe, it comforts us in all our wants whatsoever, that God will take care for us: Christ useth this argument, God, saith he, cloatheth the Lillies of the field with an excellent beauty, he cares even for the meanest plants, and will he not take care for you, *O ye of little faith?* Doth he care for Lillies that are to day, and to morrow are cast into the oven, and shall he not care for the Lillies of Paradise, the living Lillies, those holy reasonable Lillies? undoubtedly he will. Our Saviour Christs reason is undeniable, he that puts such a beauty upon the poore plants that flourish to day in the morning and wither before night, he that puts such a beauty upon the grasse of the field, will hee not put more excellency upon his children? will hee not provide for them, feed them? undoubtedly he will. Thus we have shewed why Gods children in the Church of God are compared to Lillies.

Mat. 6. 29.

*To gather Lillies.*

Christ

Christ is said to gather these Lillies, that is, he will gather them together, Christ will not have his Lillies alone scattered, though hee leaves them oft alone for a while, yet hee will gather them to Congregations and Churches: the name of a Church in the Originall is *Ecclesia*, it is nothing but a company gathered out of the world. Doe we thinke that we are Lillies by nature? no we are thornes and briers, God makes us Lillies, and then gathers us to other Lillies, that one may strengthen another. The Spirit of God in his children is not a Spirit of separation of Christians from Christians; but a Spirit of separation from the vast wilde wilderness of the world; as we say of fire, *Congregat homogenea & disgregat heterogenea*, it congregates all homogeneal things, as gold, which it gathers, but disgregates heterogeneall things, consumeth drosse: so the Spirit of God severs thornes and gathers Lillies, gathers Christians together in the Church, and will gather them for ever in Heaven.

SER. XVIII. *That Christs Lillies shall not be scattered, but he will gather them together.*

Thus wee see the answer of the Church to the *daughters of Jerusalem*, what it was, with the occasion thereof: the Question of the *daughters of Ierusalem, whither is thy Beloved gone?* so that the Church was beholding to the *daughters of Jerusalem* for ministring such a question to give her occasion to know better what her Beloved was: Indeed we many times gaine by weaker Christians good questions, though from weake ones, minister sutable answers: It is a Greek proverb, that *doubting begets plenty and abundance*, for doubting at the first begets resolution at last. O that

*That the issue of fruitfull conference is great at last, though flat and dull at beginning.*

Se. XVIII. that wee could take occaſion hence, to thinke of this, what excellent vertue is in the communion of Saints, when they meet about heavenly exerciſes, what a bleſſing followes, when though at the entry, their affections may be flat and dull, yet they part not ſo, Chriſt heats and inflames their hearts to doe much good to one another. O thoſe that ſhall for ever live together in Heaven, ſhould they not delight to live more together on earth?

## The Nineteenth Sermon.

### Cant. VI. II.

*I am my Beloveds, and my Beloved is mine, he feedeth among the Lillies.*

THeſe words are a kinde of triumphant acclamation upon all the former paſſages, as it were the foot of the Song; for when the Church had ſpoken formerly of her ill dealing with Chriſt, and how he thereupon abſented himſelfe from her, with many other paſſages, ſhe ſhuts up at laſt with this, *I am my Beloveds, and my Beloved is mine.*

Now ſhe begins to feele ſome comfort from Chriſt, who had eſtranged himſelfe from her, O (ſaith ſhe notwithſtanding all my ſufferings, deſer-

deſertions, croſſes, and the like, *I am my Beloveds, and my Beloved is mine.* Words expreſſing the wondrous comfort, joy, and contentment, the Church now had in Chriſt, having her heart inflamed with love unto him, upon his manifeſting of himſelfe to her ſoul, *I am my Beloveds, and my Beloved is mine, he feedeth among the Lillies.*

There is a mutuall intercourſe and viciſſitude of claiming intereſt betwixt Chriſt and his Church, *I am Chriſts, and Chriſt is mine. I am my Beloveds, and my Beloved is mine.*

From the dependance and order of the words, coming in after a deſertion for a while, obſerve,

*That Chriſt will not be long from his Church.* *Obſerv.*

The ſpirituall deſertions (forſakings as we uſe to call them) howſoever they be very irkeſome to the Church (that loves communion with Chriſt) and to a loving ſoule, to be deprived of the ſenſe of her beloved; yet notwithſtanding they are but ſhort, Chriſt will not be long from his Church, his love, and her deſire will not let him, they offer violence: Why art thou abſent (ſay they) why art thou ſo farre off, and hideſt thy ſelfe? *Joſeph* may conceale himſelfe for a ſpace, but he will have much adoe ſo to hold long, to be ſtraightened to his brethren, paſſion will breake out. So Chriſt may ſeeme hard to be intreated, and to croſſe his owne ſweet diſpoſition, as to the woman of *Canaan*, but he will not long keep at this diſtance, he is ſoone overcome, O woman great is thy Faith, have what thou wilt, when ſhe ſtrove with him a little (as Faith is a ſtriving grace) ſee how ſhe did win upon him. So

*Why Chriſt cannot be long abſent from his Church.*

Ser. XIX

the *Angell* and *Jacob* may ſtrive for a while, but *Jacob* at the length proves *Iſrael*, he prevailes with God. So it is with the Chriſtian ſoul and Chriſt, howſoever there be deſertion (for cauſes before mentioned) becauſe the Church was negligent (as we heare) and partly for the time to come, that Chriſt by his eſtrangement might ſweeten his comming againe, howſoever there may be ſtrangeneſſe for a time, yet Chriſt will returne againe to his Spouſe.

*Vſe* 1. *Conſolation to ſupport us in deſertion.*

The Uſe ſhould be, not onely *for comfort, to ſtay us in ſuch times, but to teach us likewiſe to wait and never give over:* If the Church had given over here, ſhe had not had ſuch gracious manifeſtations of Chriſt to her: learne hence therefore this uſe to wait Gods leiſure. God will wait to doe good to them that wait on him: If we wait his leiſure, he will wait an opportunity of doing good to us: When God ſeemes not to anſwer our prayers, let us yet wait, we ſhall not loſe by our tarrying, he will wait to do us good.

Iſa. 30. 18.

In the next place obſerve after this temporary deſertion, Chriſt viſits his Church with more abundant comfort than ever before.

*That we loſe nothing by our largeneſſe of affection to Chriſt for his returne to ours is exceeding ours.*

Now the Church cannot hold, *my Beloved is mine, and I am his*, and Chriſt cannot hold, but fals into a large commendation of his Spouſe backe againe; as ſhe was large in his commendations, ſo he is large in hers, and and more large, he will have the laſt word; therefore learn by this experience, *that all things worke together for the beſt to them that love God:* all things! What, evill? Evill; why, even ſin turns to their humiliation,

Rom. 8. 28.

yea

yea and deſertion ( thoſe ſpirituall ills ) turne to their good ; for Chriſt ſeems to forſake for a while that he may come after with more abundance of comfort, when once he hath enlarged the ſoul before with a ſpacious deſire of his comming to ſay, O that he would come, when the ſoul is thus ſtretched with deſire in the ſenſe of want, then he fils it againe till it burſt forth, *My Beloved is mine, and I am his.* It was a good experiment of *Bernard*, an holy man in ill times, *tibi accidit*, &c. ſpeaking of Chriſts dealing with his Church, he comes and he goeth away for thy good, he comes for thy good to comfort thee, after which if thou be not carefull to maintaine communion with him, then he goeth away for thy good to correct thy errour, and to enlarge thy deſire of him againe, to teach thee to lay ſure and faſter hold upon him, when thou haſt him, not to let him goe againe.

If you would ſee a parallel place to this, look in *Cant.* 3. where there is the like caſe of the Spouſe anb Chriſt, *By nights on my bed I ſought him*, the Church ſought Chriſt not onely by day but by night, *I ſought him whom my ſoul loved*, though ſhe wanted him, yet her *ſoul* loved him conſtantly. Though a Chriſtians ſoul have not preſent communion with Chriſt, yet he may truly ſay, My ſoul loves him, becauſe ſhe ſeeks him diligently and conſtantly in the uſe of all the meanes: So we ſee the Church before my Text, calls him my beloved ſtill, though ſhe wanted communion with him. Well, ſhe goes on, *I ſought him, but I found him not*, would the Church give over there? no, then ſhe riſeth and goeth about the

*That after ſeeking of Chriſt in all his meanes we muſt wait for him.*

*This is the ſureſt token of true fervent love to Chriſt.*

SER. XIX.

City, and about the ſtreets, and *ſeeks him whom her ſoul loved*, ſeeks him and will not give over. So I ſought him (but I wanted the iſſue of my ſeeking) I found him not: what comes upon that? *The Watchmen go about the City and finde her*, of whom, when by her owne ſeeking ſhe could not finde Chriſt, ſhe enquires, *Saw you him whom my ſoul loveth?* ſhe enquires of the Watchmen, the guides of Gods people, who could not ſatisfie her fully, ſhe could not finde her beloved, yet what doth ſhe? ſhe ſhewes, *Ver.* 4. It was but a little that ſhe ſtayed; after ſhe had uſed all means private and publike, *in her bed*, out of her bed, by the *Watchmen* and others; yet (ſaith ſhe) it was but a little that I was paſt from them, ſhe had not an anſwer preſently, though the Watchmen gave her ſome good counſell, it was not preſently, yet not long after. Chriſt will exerciſe us a while with waiting, *It was but a little that I paſſed from them, but I found him whom my ſoule loved.* After all our ſeeking there muſt be waiting, and then we ſhall finde him whom our ſoul loveth: perhaps we have uſed all meanes private and publike, and yet finde not that comfort we look for, O but wait a while, God hath a long time waited for thee, be thou content to wait a while for him, we ſhall not loſe by it, for it follows in the next verſe, after ſhe had found him whom her ſoul loved, *I held him*, I *would not let him goe* So this is the iſſue of deſertions, they ſtirre up diligence and ſearching in the uſe of meanes private and publike, and exerciſe patience to wait Gods leiſure, who will not ſuffer a gracious ſoul

*If God wait long for us, it is equity to wait for him.*

ſoul to faile of its expectation, at length he will fulfill the deſires of them that feare him, and this comes of their patience, grace growes greater and ſtronger, *I held him and would not let him go, untill I had brought him unto my mothers houſe.* SER. XIX. Pſal. 145.

Thus you ſee how the Spirit expreſſeth the ſame truth in another ſtate of the Church; compare place with place. To goe on,

*I am my beloveds, and my beloved is mine.*

The words themſelves are a paſſionate expreſſion of long lookt for conſolation. Affections have eloquence of their owne beyond words; feare hath a proper expreſſion, love vents it ſelfe in broken words, and ſighes, delighting in a peculiar eloquence ſutable to the height and pitch of the affection, that no words can reach unto, ſo that here is more in the words breathed from ſuch an inflamed heart than in ordinary conſtruction can be pickt out (*I am my Beloveds*, &c.) comming from a full and large heart, expreſſing the union and communion betweene Chriſt and the Church (eſpecially after a deſertion) *I am my Beloveds, and my Beloved is mine.*

*That there muſt be union of perſons before union and communion of graces with Chriſt.*

Firſt (I ſay) the union, *viz.* the union of perſons which is before all comfort and communion of graces, *I am my Beloveds, and my Beloved is mine*, Chriſts perſon is ours, and our perſons are his; for as it is in marriage, if the perſon of the husband be not the wives, his goods are not hers, nor his titles of honour; for theſe come all to her, becauſe his perſon is hers, he having paſſed over the right of his owne body, and of his perſon to his wife, as ſhe hath paſſed over all the

Serm. XIX.

right of her self to her husband: so it is in this mystical marriage, that that intitles us to communion of graces in union of persons between Christ and his Church, *I am my Beloveds, and my Beloved himself is mine*; and indeed nothing else will content a Christians heart, he would not care so much for Heaven it self, if he had not Christ there: the Sacrament, word and comforts, why doth he esteem them? as they come from Christ, and as they lead to Christ; it is but an adulterous and base affection to love any thing severed from Christ.

*That from union of persons comes communion of all other things whatsoever.*

Now from this union of persons comes a communion of all other things whatsoever, *I am my Beloveds, and my Beloved is mine*: If Christ himself be mine, then all is mine, what he hath done, what he hath suffered is mine, the benefit of all is mine, what he hath is mine, his prerogatives and privileges, to be the Son of God, and heir of heaven, and the like, all is mine. Why? himself is mine, union is the foundation of communion. So it is here with the Church, *I am my Beloveds*, my person is his, my life is his, to glorifie him, and to lay it down when he will, my goods are his, my reputation his, I am content to sacrifice all for him, I am his, all mine is his: so you see there is union and communion mutually between Christ and his Church. The Original and spring hereof is Christs uniting and communicating himself to his Church first; the spring begins to the stream, what hath the stream or cistern in it, but what is had from the spring? first we love him, because he loved us first. It was

1 Joh. 4. 19.

a true

SER. XIX.

a true ſpeech of *Auguſtine*, *Quicquid bonum*, &c. Whatſoever is good in the world or lovely, it is either God, or from God; it is either Chriſt, or from Chriſt, he begins it; It is ſaid in nature love deſcends, the father and the mother love the childe before the childe can love them: love indeed is of a fiery nature, onely here is the diſſimilitude, fire aſcends, love deſcends, it is ſtronger deſcending from the greater to the leſſe, than aſcending up from the meaner to the greater, and that for this,

*Why the magnanimity of the greater ſtoops in love to the leſſer.*

Amongſt other reaſons, *Becauſe the greater perſon looks upon the leſſer as a peece of himſelfe*, ſees himſelfe in it, the father and mother ſee themſelves in their childe: ſo God loves us more than we can love him, becauſe he ſets his Image in us; neither is there only a priority of order, he loves us firſt, & then we love him; but alſo of cauſality, he is the cauſe of our love, not by way of motive onely he loves us, and therefore from an ingenuous ſpirit we muſt love him againe; but he gives us his ſpirit, circumciſeth our hearts to love him; for all the motives or morall perſwaſions in the world without the Spirit cannot make us love, we are taught of God to love one another, our brethren whom we ſee daily (ſaith *Paul*) much more need we be taught to love him whom we never ſaw, ſo that his love kindles ours by way of reflection.

Deut. 30.

1 Theſſ. 4. 9.

*That in the new Covenant God works both parts.*

*How to have our hearts warmed with the love of God.*

In the New Covenant, God workes both parts, his owne and our parts too, our love to him, our feare of him, our faith in him, he works all, even as he ſhewes his owne love to us.

If God love us thus, what muſt we doe? me-

Pſal. 39.

SER. XIX.

ditate upon his love, let our hearts be warmed with the consideration of it, let us bring them to that fire of his love, and then they will wax hot within us, and beg the Spirit, Lord thou hast promised to give thy Spirit to them that aske it, & to circumcise our hearts to love thee, and to love one another, give thy holy Spirit as thou hast promised.

Luk. 11.

*That this confidence of the Church implies*

1. *Propriety.*

In a word, these words, *I am my Beloveds, and my Beloved is mine*, to joyne them both together, they imply a mutuall propriety; Christ hath a propriety in me, and I in Christ, peculiar propriety, Christ is mine, so as I have none in the world so mine; Whom have I in Heaven but Christ? and what is there in earth in comparison of him? he is mine, and mine in a peculiar manner, and I am his in a peculiar manner, there is propriety with peculiarity.

2. *Love.*

Then againe these words *I am his*, implies mutuall love; all is mutuall in them, mutuall propriety, mutuall peculiarity, and mutuall love, I love Christ so as I love nothing else, there is nothing above him in my heart, as Christ loves me more than any thing else (saith the Church) and every Christian: he loves all, and gives outward benefits to all, but to me hath given himselfe, so love I him. As the husband loves all in the family, his cattell and his servants, but he gives himselfe to his Spouse: so Christ is mine, himselfe is mine, and my selfe am Christs, he hath my soul, my affections, my body, and all, he hath a propriety in me, and a peculiarity in me, he hath my affection and love to the uttermost, as I have his, for there is an entercourse in these words.

Then

SER. XIX.

Then againe, they imply mutuall familiarity, Christ is familiar to my soul and I to Christ, hee discovers himselfe to mee in the secret of his love, and I discover my selfe to him in prayer and meditation, opening my soul to him upon all occasions. Gods children have a spirit of prayer, which is a spirit of fellowship, and talkes (as it were) to God in Christ; It is the language of a new borne Christian, he cries to his Father, there is a kinde of familiarity betweene him and his God in Christ, who gives the entrance and accesse to God, so that where there is not a kinde of familiarity in prayer and opening of the soul to Christ upon all occasions, there is not this holy communion. Those that are not given to prayer, they cannot in truth speake these words, as the Church doth here, *I am my Beloveds, and my Beloved is mine*, for they imply sweet familiarity.

3. *Familiarity.*

Then againe they imply mutuall likenesse one to another, he is mine and I am his, the one is a glasse to the other, Christ sees himselfe in me, I see my selfe in him: for this is the issue of spirituall love especially, that it breeds likenesse and resemblance of the party loved in the soul that loveth; for love frameth the soul to the likenesse of the party loved, I am his, I resemble him, I am his, I have given my selfe to him, I carry his picture and resemblance in my soul; for they are words of mutuall conformity. Christ out of love became like me in all things, wherein I am not like the Devill (that is, sinne excepted) if he became like me, taking my nature that I might be neare him in the fellowship of grace, *My Beloved is mine*,

4. *Mutuall likeneſs.*

*That love frameth the soul to the likeness of the party loved.*

SER. XIX.

I will be as like him as possible I can, I am his, every Christian carries a character of Christs disposition as far as weakness will suffer, you may know Christ in every Christian; for as the Kings coyn carries the stamp of the King, *Cæsars* coyn bears *Cæsars* superscription, so every Christian soul is Gods coyn, and he sets his own stamp upon it; if we be Christs, there is a mutual conformity betwixt him and us.

Now where you see a malitious, unclean, worldly spirit, know that is the stamp of the Devil, none of Christs, he that hath not the Spirit of God is none of his, now where the Spirit of Christ is, it stamps Christs likeness upon the soul; therefore we are exhorted, *Phil.* 2. 5. to be like minded to Christ.

*Mutual care of one anothers good.*

Again, these words, *I am my Beloveds, and my Beloved is mine*, imply a mutual care that Christ and the soul have one of the good of another, of each others honour and reputation. As Christ hath a care of our good: so a Christian soul (if it can say with truth and sincerity I am Christs) it must needs have care of Christs good, of his children, Religion, and Truth. What? will such a soul say, shall Christ care for my body, soul, and salvation, and stoop to come from Heaven to save me, and shall I have no care for him and his glory? he hath left his truth and his Church behind him, and shall not I defend his truth, and stand for the poor Church to the utmost of my power against all contrary power? shall not I stand for Religion? shall it be all one to me, what opinions are held? shall I pretend he cares for me,

*What Christ hath to care for in the world.*

and

and ſhall not I care for that I ſhould care for? Is it not an honour to me that he hath truſted me to care for any thing that he will be honoured by my care: Beloved it is an honour for us that we may ſpeak a good word for Religion, for Chriſts cauſe, for his Church againſt maligners and oppoſers, and we ſhall know one day that Chriſt will be a rewarder of every good word: where this is ſaid in ſincerity, that Chriſt is mine, and I am Chriſts, there will be this mutual care.

*A mutual complacency or reſting love.*

Likewiſe there is implyed a mutual complacency in theſe words; by a complacency, I mean a reſting, contenting love, Chriſt hath a complacency and reſting in the Church, and the Church hath a ſweet reſting contentment in Chriſt; Chriſt in us, and we in him. A true Chriſtian ſoul that hath yeelded up its conſent to Chriſt, when it is barren in the world, vexed and turmoiled, it can rely on this, I have yet a loving husband, yet I have Chriſt.

*What we ſhould retire to and do in afflictions.*

Let this put us upon a ſearch into our ſelves what we retire to when we meet with afflictions; thoſe that have brutiſh and beaſtly ſouls retire to carnall contentments, to good fellowſhip, forget, beſot, and fly away from themſelves, their own conſciences, and thought of their own trouble, whereas a ſoul that hath any acquaintance with God in Chriſt, or any intereſt into Chriſt, ſo that it may ſay, that Chriſt is mine and I am Chriſts, there will be contentment and reſt in ſuch a ſoul, whatſoever it meets with in the world.

7.

*It courage in owning Chriſts cauſe with reſolution, for the Church is reſolute.*

The laſt thing implyed is courage, a branch of the former; ſay all againſt it what they can, ſaith the reſolved ſoul, I will be Chriſts, here is courage

SER. XIX. courage with resolution; agreeable hereto is that *Isa.* 44.5. One shall say, I am the Lords, and another shall call himselfe by the name of *Jacob*, another shall subscribe and surname himself by the name of *Israel.* Where there is not this resolution in good causes, there is not the Spirit of Christ, there is no interest unto Christ, it is but a delusion & self flattery to say Iam Christs, when there is not resolution to stand to Christ: these words are the expression of a resolved heart, I am, and I will be Christs, I am not ashamed of my bargaine, of the consent I have given him, I am and I will be his. You have the like in *Micah* 4.5. All people will walke every one in the name of his god, they will resolve on that, and we will walke in the name of the Lord our God for ever and ever: so that where these words are spoken in truth, that I am Christs, there is necessarily implyed, I will owne him and his cause for ever and ever.

Micah 4. 5

He hath married me for ever and ever, therefore if I hope to have interest in him for comfort for ever and ever, I must be sure to yeeld my selfe to him for ever and ever, and stand for his cause in all oppositions against all enemies whatsoever. These and such like places in Scripture run parallel with this in the text, I *am my Beloveds, and my Beloved is mine*, not onely holding in the person, but in the cause of Christ. Every man hopes his God will stand for him against the Devill who accuseth us dayly: if we will have Christ to stand for us, and to be an Advocate to plead our cause (as he doth) in Heaven, we must resolve to stand for him against all enemies, heretickes, schismatickes

tickes, perſecutors whatſoever, that we will walke in the name of our God, for ever and ever.

Serm. XIX.

But when the caſe is not thus with us, and that neither we can feele comfort from Chriſt, nor have this aſſurance of his love to us, what ſhould we judge of ſuch?

*Queſt.*

We ſhould not wonder to ſee poore ſoules diſtempered when they are in ſpirituall deſertions, conſidering how the Spouſe cannot endure the abſence of Chriſt, it is out of love, therefore in the deepeſt plunge ſhe hath this in her mouth, *My Beloved.* Therefore let us not judge amiſs of our ſelves or others, when we are impatient in this kinde.

*Anſw.*

*That we ſhould not wonder to ſee diſtemper in deſertion.*

But for a more full anſwer, in want of feeling of the love of Chriſt in regard of that meaſure wee would (for there is never altogether a want of feeling) there is ſo much as keeps from deſpaire alway; yet if we carry a conſtant love towards him, mourne to him and ſeeke after him, as the Church here: If the deſire of our ſouls be after him, that wee make after him in the uſe of meanes, and are willing to ſpeake of him, as the Church here, feele or feele not, wee are his, and he will at length diſcover himſelfe to us.

Let ſuch drooping ſpirits conſider, that as hee will not be long from us, nor wholly: ſo it ſhall not be for our diſadvantage that hee retires at all, his abſence at length will end in a ſweet diſcovery of himſelfe more abundantly than before; hee abſents himſelfe for our good, to make us more humble and watchfull for the time to come, more pitifull to others, more to prize our former condition, to juſtifie the wayes of God more

*Cauſes why God abſents himſelfe from his children.*

SER. XIX.

more ſtrictly, to walke with him to regaine that ſweet communion which by our negligence and ſecurity wee loſt, when wee are thus prepared by his abſence, there enſues a more ſatisfying diſcovery of himſelfe than ever before.

*When uſually Chriſt returnes after deſertion to the ſoul.*

But when is the time he comes? Compare this with the former Chapter, he comes after long waiting for him, the Church waited for him, and waited in the uſe of all means, ſhe runs to the Watchmen, and then enquires after him of *the daughters of Ieruſalem*, after this ſhe finds him. After we have waited and expected Chriſt in the uſe of meanes, Chriſt at length will diſcover himſelfe to us. And yet more immediately it was after the Church had ſo deſervedly exalted him in ſuch lofty praiſes, *This is my Beloved the chiefe of ten thouſand, he is altogether lovely*: When we ſet our hearts to the high exaltation of Chriſt above all things in the world, proclaiming him *the chiefe of ten thouſand*, this at the laſt breeds a gracious diſcovery, *I am my Beloveds, and my Beloved is mine*; for Chriſt when he ſees us faithfull, & ſo loving, that we will not endure his abſence, and ſo conſtantly loving, that we love him notwithſtanding ſome diſcouragements, it melts him at the laſt, as *Ioſeph* was melted by his Brethren.

*I am my Beloveds, and my Beloved is mine.*

*That in order of nature Chriſt is ours firſt, though in order of knowing it is not ſo.*

In the words you ſee a mutuall intereſt and owning betweene Chriſt and the Church, howſoever in the order of words, the Church ſaith, *I am my Beloveds* firſt; yet in order of nature Chriſt is ours firſt, though not in order of diſcovery, there is one order of knowing, and another order

order of cauſing, many things are knowen by the effect, but they iſſue from a cauſe; I know he is mine, becauſe I am his, I have given my ſelfe to him, I know it is day, becauſe the Sunne is up, there is a proofe from the effect: ſo I know a man is alive, becauſe he walks, there is a proofe of the cauſe by the effect I am his, I have grace to give my ſelfe up to him; therefore I know he loves me, he is mine: thus I ſay in order of diſcovery; but in order of nature, he is firſt mine, and then I am his, *My Beloved is mine, and I am my Beloveds.*

The Union and Communion betwixt us and Chriſt hath been already ſpoken of.

Now to ſpeake of the branches, *I am my Beloveds, and my Beloved is mine.* That Chriſt is firſt ours, and then we are his becauſe he is ours, and the wondrous comfort that iſſues hence, that Chriſt himſelfe is ours.

*How Chriſt comes to be ours*
1.

How comes Chriſt to be ours? Chriſt is ours *by his Fathers gift*, God hath given him for us. Chriſt is ours by his owne gift, he hath given himſelfe for us.

*By his owne and his Fathers gif.*
2.
*By his Spirit.*

And Chriſt is ours by his Spirit that witneſſeth ſo much to our ſpirit; for the Spirit is given for this purpoſe, to ſhew us all things that are given us of God, whereof Chriſt is the chiefe; therefore the Spirit of Chriſt tels us that Chriſt is ours, and Chriſt being ours, all that he hath is ours.

If he be ours, if we have the field, we have all the treaſures in the field; if we have him, we have all his, he was born for us, his birth was for us, he became man for us, he was given to death for us,

Ser. XIX

us, and ſo likewiſe he is ours in his other eſtate of *exaltation*, his riſing is for our good, he will cauſe us to riſe alſo, and aſcend with him, and ſit in heavenly places, judging the world, and the Angels. We recover in this ſecond what wee loſt in the firſt *Adam*.

*Vſe* 1. *Conſolation.*

This is a point of wondrous comfort, to ſhew the riches of a Chriſtian, his high eſtate, that Chriſt is his.

2 Cor. 1. 20.

And Chriſt being ours, God the Father and the Holy Spirit, and all things elſe in the world, the rich promiſes are ours; for in Chriſt they are all made, and for him they ſhall be performed, for indeede he is the chiefe promiſe of all himſelfe, and all are Yea and Amen in him. Can we want Righteouſneſſe, while we have Chriſts Righteouſneſſe? is not his garment large enough for himſelfe and us too? is not his obedience enough for us? ſhall we need to patch it up with our owne righteouſneſſe? he is ours, therefore his obedience is ours.

*Vſe* 2. *Contentation.*

And this ſhall be a ground likewiſe of contentation in our condition and ſtate whatſoever, Chriſt himſelfe is ours. In the dividing of all things ſome men have wealth, honours, friends, and greatneſſe, but not Chriſt, nor the love of God in Chriſt, and therefore they have nothing in mercy; but a Chriſtian he hath Chriſt himſelfe; Chriſt is his by faith and by the ſpirits witneſſe; therefore what if he want thoſe appendences, the leſſer things? he hath the maine: what if he want a riveret, a ſtreame? he hath the ſpring, the ocean, him in whom all things are, & ſhall he not be content? Put caſe a man be very covetous, yet God might

ſatisfie

Serm. XIX.

ſatisfie him. What ſhould anxious thoughts diſquiet us? when we have ſuch bils, ſuch obligations from him whoſe faithfulneſſe it ſelfe, when a Chriſtian cannot ſay, honour, favour, or great perſons are his; yet he can ſay he hath that that is worth all, more then all, Chriſt is his.

*Object.* O may ſome ſay; this is but a ſpeculation, Chriſt is yours, a man may want and be in miſery for all that? *Anſw.* No it is a realty, Chriſt is ours, and all things elſe are ours, he that can command all things is mine, why then do I want other things? becauſe he ſees they are not for my good, if they were he would not withhold them from me, if there were none to be had without a miracle, no comfort, no friends, he could and would make new out of nothing, nay out of contraries, were it not better for me to be without them. *Why ſometimes we want outward things being in Chriſt.*

*Vſe. 3.* That you may the more fully feed on this comfort, ſtudy the excellencies of Chriſt in the Scripture, the riches and honour that he hath, the favour he is in with his Father, with the interceſſion that he makes in Heaven, ſtudy his mercy, goodneſſe, offices, power, &c. and then come home to your ſelves, all this is mine, for he is mine, the love of God is mine, God loves him, and therefore he loves me, becauſe we are both one, he loves me with the ſame love that he loves his Sonne. Thus we ſhould make uſe of this, that Chriſt is ours. I come to the ſecond. *Exhortation to ſtudy the excellency of Chriſt.* Jon. 17. ult.

*I am my Beloveds.*

This is a ſpeech of reflection, ſecond in nature, though firſt in place and in diſcovery to us. Sometimes we can know our owne love, when wee 1 Joh 4 19.

SER. XIX.

*How we come to be, and are in Christ beloved.*

feele not ſo much the love of Chriſt, but Chriſts love muſt be there firſt, *I am my Beloveds.*

How are we Chriſts Beloved? wee are his, firſt of all by his Fathers gift; for God in his eternall purpoſe gave him for us, and gives us to him, as it is in that excellent prayer, *Joh.* 17. Father thine they were, and thou gaveſt them me. I had not them of my ſelfe firſt, but thine they were before all worlds were, thou gaveſt them me to redeeme them, and my Commiſſion doth not extend beyond thy gift; I die for all thoſe that thou gaveſt me, I ſanctifie my ſelfe for them that they may be ſanctified: ſo we are Chriſts in his Fathers gift; but that is not all, though it be the chiefe fundamentall principall ground of all.

1. *By his Fathers gift.*

2. *By Redemption.*

For we are his likewiſe by Redemption, Chriſt tooke our nature, that he might die for us to purchaſe us. We coſt him dear, we are a bloudy Spouſe to Chriſt, as that froward woman wrongfully ſaid to *Moſes*, thou art a bloudy husband unto me: ſo Chriſt may without wrong ſay to the Church, thou art a ſpouſe of bloud to me. We were indeed to be his Spouſe; but firſt he muſt win us by conqueſt in regard of Satan, and then ſatisfie juſtice, wee were in ſuch debt by ſin, lying under Gods wrath, ſo as till all debts were paid, wee could not in the way of juſtice be given as a Spouſe to Chriſt.

Exod. 4. 25.

3. *By Marriage.*

Nor is this all, but we are Chriſts by Marriage alſo, for when he purchaſed us, and paid ſo deare for us; when he died and ſatisfied divine juſtice, he did it with a purpoſe to marry us to him ſelfe, we have nothing to bring him but debt and miſery, yet he tooke upon him our nature

to

to discharge all, that he might marry us, and take us to himselfe, so we are his by Marriage.

Then againe we are his by Consent, wee have passed our selves over unto him, he hath given himselfe to us, and wee have given our selves to him backe againe. To come to some use of it, if we be Christs as Christ ours.

4. *By consent.*

*Vse.* 1. *Consolation against wants.*

First, it is a point of wondrous comfort, God will not suffer his own to want, he is worse then an Infidell that will suffer his Family to perish; when we are once of Christs Family, and not only of his Family but of his body, his Spouse, can we thinke he will suffer us to want that which is needfull?

2. *Against all Satans accusations*

Then againe, as it comforts us against want, so it likewise fenceth us against all the accusations of Satan, I am Christs, I am Christs, if he have any thing to say, loe we may bid him goe to Christ: If the Creditor comes to the wife, she is not lyable to pay her own debts, but saith, goe to my husband: so in all temptations learne hence, to send Satan whither he should be sent, when we cannot answer him, send him to Christ.

3. *For the time to come.*

And for the time to come, what a ground of comfort is this, that we are Christs as well as he is ours? what a plea doth this put into our mouthes for all things that are beneficiall to us, Lord I am thine, save me (saith the Psalmist) why? save me, because I am thine, I am thine, Lord teach me and direct me. The husband is to direct the Spouse, the head should direct all the senses: All the treasures of wisdome are in Christ, as all the senses are in the head for the good of the body, all fulnesse dwels in him; therefore

SER. XIX.

pleade with him, I want wisdome, teach me and instruct me how to behave my selfe in troubles, in dangers, in feares: If it be an argument strong enough amongst men (weake men) I am thine, I am thy childe, I am thy Spouse, &c. Shall we attribute more pity and mercy to our selves than to the God of mercy and comfort, who planted these affections in the creature? Shall he make men tender and carefull over others, and shall not he himselfe be carefull of his own flocke? doe wee thinke that he will neglect his jewels, his Spouse, his Diadem and Crowne? he will not.

Isa. 6. 2, 3.

But you will urge experience, wee see how the Church is used even as a forlorne widow, as if she had no husband in the world; as an Orphant that hath no Father, therefore how doth this stand good?

*Answ.* 1. *That the sufferings both of the Church and particular persons, is especially for conformity with Christ the head.*

The answer is, all that the Church or any particular Christians suffer in this world, it is but that there may be a conformity betweene the Spouse and the Husband. The Head wore a crowne of thornes, and went to Heaven & happines, through a great deal of misery and abasement in the world, the lowest that ever was: And it is not meet that the Church should goe to Heaven another way.

2. *To fashion her to be like Christ.*

Then again, all this is but to fashion the Spouse to be like to Christ, but to bring the Church and Christ nearer together, that is all the hurt they doe, to drive the Church nearer to Christ than before, Christ is as neare to his Church as ever in the greatest afflictions by his Spirit, Christ cryes out on the crosse, *My God my God, why hast thou forsaken me?* It is a strange voyce,

voice, that God ſhould be his God, and yet notwithſtanding ſeeme to forſake him. But God was never more his God than at that preſent; indeed he was not his God in regard of ſome feelings that he had injoyed in former times, he ſeemed to be forſaken in regard of ſome ſenſe, as Chriſt ſeems to forſake the Church in regard of ſome ſenſe and feeling, but yet his God ſtill. So the Church may ſay, I am thine ſtill, though ſhe ſeeme to be forſaken in regard of ſome feelings, yet ſhe is not deſerted in regard of Gods care for ſupport of the inward man and faſhioning to Chriſt. The Church hath never ſweeter communion with Chriſt, than under the greateſt croſſes; and therefore they many times have proved the ground of the greateſt comforts; for Chriſt leads the Church into the wilderneſſe, and then ſpeaks to her heart, *Hoſea* 2. 14. Chriſt ſpeaks to the heart of his Spouſe in the wilderneſſe, that is, in a place of no comfort, there are no Orchards or pleaſures, but all diſcomforts, there a man muſt have it from Heaven if he have any good in the wilderneſſe. In that wilderneſſe, that is, in a deſolate diſconſolate eſtate, Chriſt ſpeaks to the heart of his children, there is in the wilderneſſe oftentimes a ſweet intercourſe of love incomparably beyond the time of proſperity.

SER. XIX.

*That though Chriſt ſeem abſent in affliction, yet he is never more graciouſly neerer then then.*

*That the ſweeteſt Communion with Chriſt is under the greateſt croſſes.*

Againe, to ſtay your hearts, know this will not be long, as we ſee here the Church ſeemed to be forſaken and neglected, fell into the hands of cruell Watchmen, and was faine to goe through this and that meanes, but it was not long ere ſhe met with him whom ſhe ſought after. It may be

SER. XIX.

midnight at this time, but the night continues not long, it will be morning ere long; therefore the Church may well say, *Rejoyce not against me, O mine enemy*, as it is *Micah* 7. For though I bee fallen, I shall rise againe, though I sit in darknesse, the Lord will be a light unto me. It shall not be alway ill with the Church, those that survive us shall see other manner of dayes then wee see yet (whatsoever we shall our selves.) Hence we have also an Use of Tryall, Whosoever are Christs, they have hearts to give themselves to him, as he gives himselfe, not his goods or his honours, but himselfe for his Church. So the Church gives her selfe to Christ, My delight is in him, he hath my selfe, my heart, my love and affection, my joy and delight, and all with my selfe; if I have any honour, he shall have it, I will use it for his glory, my riches I will give them to him and his Church, and Ministery and Children, (as occasion shall serve) I am his, therefore all that I have is his if he aske it at my hands. It is said of the *Macedonians*, they gave themselves to Christ, and then their riches and goods; it is an easie matter to give our riches to Christ, when we have given our selves first. A Christian as soone as ever he becomes a Christian, and ever after to death and in death too, he gives up himselfe to Christ; they that stand with Christ, and will give this or that particular, will part only with idle things that they may spare, are they Christs? No, a Christian gives himselfe, and all his to Christ; so wee see here what we should doe if Christ be ours, let us give up our selves unto him, as it is

Micah 7. 8.

*Triall if or not we be Christs by giving our selves over to him to be ruled by him.*

*That after we have given our selves to Christ, it is an easie matter to part with all things unto him.*
2 Cor. 8. 5.

*Rom.*

*Rom.* 12. the iſſue of all that learned profound diſcourſe in the former part of the Epiſtle, that Chriſt juſtifieth us by his righteouſneſſe and merit, and ſanctifies us by his Spirit, and hath predeſtinated and elected us and refuſed others, is this, *I beſeech you give up your ſoules and bodies, and all, as a living ſacrifice, holy and acceptable unto God.*

*That the Churches confidence implies renunciation, and reſignation in a deep ſenſe.*

In briefe, theſe words imply renunciation and reſignation, *I am his*, that is, I have given up my ſelfe to him, therefore I renounce all others that ſtand not with his love and liking. I am not only his by way of ſervice, which I owe him above all that call for it; but I am his by way of reſignation, if he will have me dye, I will dye, if he will have me live here, I will, I have not my ſelfe to diſpoſe of any longer, I have altogether alienated my ſelf from my ſelfe, I am his to ſerve him, his to be diſpoſed of by him, I have renounced all other.

*Anſw.*

*An anſwer to Satan againſt deſpaire or ſin in temptation.*

Therefore here we have another anſwer to Satan, If he comes to us and ſolicite us to ſinne, let the Chriſtians heart make this anſwer, I am not mine owne, what hath Satan and his inſtruments to doe with me? is my body his to defile? is my tongue his to ſweare at his pleaſure? ſhall I make the temple of God the member of an harlot? (as the Apoſtle reaſons) ſhall I defile my veſſell with ſinne? What ſaith converted *Ephraim*, *Hoſea* 14. 8. *What have I any more to doe with Idols, for I have ſeen and obſerved him?* We ought to have ſuch reſolutions ready in our hearts: indeed when a Chriſtian is reſolute, the world counts ſuch to be loſt, he is gone, we have loſt him, ſay your diſſolute prophane perſons. It is

1 Cor. 6. 15.

SER. XIX.

true they loſt him indeed, for he is not his owne, much leſſe theirs any longer, but he is found to God and himſelfe, and the Church. Thus we ſee what ſprings from this, that Chriſt is ours, and that we are Chriſts backe again. Let us carry this with us even to death, and if times ſhould come that God ſhould honour us by ſerving himſelfe of us in our lives, if Chriſt will have us ſpend our bloud, conſider this, I am not mine own in life nor death, and it is my happineſſe that I am not mine owne; for if I were mine owne, what ſhould I doe with my ſelfe? I ſhould loſe my ſelfe as *Adam* did. It is therefore my happineſſe that I am not mine owne, that I am not the worlds, that I am not the Devils, that none elſe hath to doe with me, to claime any intereſt in me, but I am Chriſts, if I doe any thing for others, it is for Chriſts ſake. Remember this for the time to come, if there be any thing that we will not part with for Chriſts ſake, it will be our bane, we ſhall loſe Chriſt and it too. If wee will not ſay with a perfect ſpirit, I am his, my life, my credit, my perſon is his, any thing his, looke what wee will not give for him, at length we ſhall loſe and part with it and him too.

*That it is our exceeding happines that now we are not our owne.*

THE

## The twentieth Sermon.

### CANT. VI. II.

*I am my beloveds, and my beloved is mine, he feedeth among the Lillies.*

THE Church you ſee here, though ſhe ſtood out a while againſt all Chriſts invitation and knocking, yet at length ſhe is brought to yeeld her ſelfe up wholly unto Chriſt, and to renounce her ſelfe, which courſe God takes with moſt, yea in a manner with all his people ere they goe out of this world, to lay all high things low, to beat down every high thought and imagination which exalteth it ſelfe againſt him, that they may give themſelves and all they have to Chriſt, if he call for it; for he that doth not ſo is not worthy of Chriſt, if we doe not this at leaſt in preparation of minde, let us not owne the name of Chriſtians, leſt we owne that which ſhall further increaſe and aggravate our condemnation, profeſſing Religion one way, and yet alienating our minds to our luſts and pleaſures of the world another way, to have peculiar love-fits of our owne, diſtinct from Chriſt, how ſtands this with, *I am my beloveds and my beloved is mine*? how ſtands it with the ſelfe reſignation that was ſpoken of before?

2 Cor. 10. Luk. 14. 26.

Now

SER. XX.

*Reasons of self-resignation to Christ, being perswaded that he is ours.*

Now this followes upon apprehension of Christ being ours, *I am my Beloveds, because my Beloved is mine first.* There are four reasons why Christ must be given to us, before we can give our selves to him by this self resignation.

1. *Because he is the chiefe spring of all good affections*, which he must plant in us, loving us, ere we can love him, 1 *Ioh.* 4. 10, 19.

2. *Because love descends*; though it be of a fiery nature, yet in this it is contrary, for love descends, whereas fire ascends, the superiour first loves the inferiour, Christ must descend in his love to us, ere we can ascend to him in our affections.

3. *Because our nature is such that we cannot love but where we know our selves to be loved first*; therefore God is indulgent to us herein, and that we may love him he manifests his love first to us.

4. *Because naturally our selves being conscious of guilt are full of feares from thence: so that if the soul be not perswaded first of Christs love, it runns away from him, as Adam did from God, and as Peter from Christ, Depart from me, for I am but a sinfull man.* So the Soule of every man would say, if first it were not perswaded of Gods love in Christ, Who amongst us shall dwell with the everlasting burning? therefore to prevent that disposition of soul, which would rise out of the sense of guilt and unworthinesse, God first speaks to us in Christ; at length saying unto our soules, *I am thy salvation*, whereupon the soule first finding his love, loves him back againe of whom it finds it selfe so much beloved, so that our love is but a reflection of his, *I am my Beloveds, Because my Beloved is mine.*

Isa. 33.

I

SER. XX.

It is with the Spirit of God, as with the ſpirits in the ſoule and body of a man, there is a marriage betwixt the body and ſoule, the ſpirits joyne both together, being of a middle nature, for they have ſomewhat ſpirituall near the ſoule, and ſomewhat bodily near the body, therefore they come between the body and the ſoule, and are the inſtruments thereof, whereby it works. So it is with the Spirit of God, the ſame Spirit that tels the ſoule that Chriſt is ours, the ſame Spirit makes up the match on our part, and gives us up to Chriſt againe.

Let this then be the tryall, that we are Chriſts, by the ſpirituall Eccho that our ſoules makes to that report with Chriſt makes to our ſoules, whether in promiſes or in inſtructions.

See hence likewiſe the nature of Faith; for theſe are the words of Faith, as well as of love. Faith hath two branches, it doth give as well as take: Faith receives Chriſt, and ſayes, Chriſt is mine, and the ſame Faith ſaith, I am Chriſts againe. Indeed our ſoules are empty, ſo that the maine worke of Faith is to be an empty hand, *Mendica Manus* (as *Luther* calls it) a beggers hand to receive; but when it hath received, it gives backe againe, both our ſelves and all that we can do; as 2 *Cor.* 8. 5 The Churches of *Macedonia* gave themſelves, and then they gave their goods. Where Faith is, there will be a giving of our ſelves and our goods, and (by a proportion) our ſtrength, wits and all backe again. This diſcovers a great deale of empty falſe Faith in the world; for undoubtedly if it were true Faith, there would be a yeelding backe againe.

*Vſe. 1. Of Inſtruction.*

*That faith hath a double worke as to receive Chriſt, ſo to give us back again to Chriſt.*

And

SER. XX. *That the Churches confidence shewes a mutuall counterview of justification and sanctification.*

And againe these words discover the mutuall coherence of *Justification* and *Sanctification*, and the dependence one upon another, *I am my Beloveds, and my Beloved is mine*, Christ is mine, his righteousnesse is mine for my justification, I am cloathed with Christ, as it is, *Rev.* 12. *The Spouse there is cloathed with the Sunne*, with the beames of Christ; but is that all? No, *I am my beloveds*, I am Christs, *there is a returne of Faith in Sanctification*, the same Spirit that witnesseth Christ is ours, it sanctifies and alters our disposition, that we can say, I am Christs. It serves to instruct us therefore in the necessary connexion of these two, *Justification* & *Sanctification*, against the idle slander of *Papists*, that sinfully traduce that Doctrine, as if we were Solifideans, as if we severed *Iustification* from *Sanctification*. No, we hold here that whensoever Christ is ours, there is a Spirit of Sanctification in us, to yeeld all to Christ though this resignation be not presently perfect.

*Vse.* 3. *A direction how to understand the Covenant of Grace.*

This likewise helps us (by way of direction) to understand the Covenant of Grace, and the Seales of the Covenant, what they inforce and comprise, not onely what God will doe to us, but the duty we are to doe to him againe, though we doe it in his strength. A Covenant holds not on one side, but on both, *Christ is mine, and I am Christs* againe, *I will be their God*, but they must have grace *to be my people*, and then the Covenant is made up. The Covenant of Grace is so called, because God is so gracious as to inable us to performe our owne part.

*Instanced in the Seales of the Covenant.*

And so in the Seales of the Covenant, in Baptisme.

tiſme, God doth not only binde himſelfe to doe thus and thus to us, but binds us alſo to goe backe againe to him. So in the Communion we promiſe to lead a new life, renewing our Covenant, and therefore we muſt not thinke that all is well, when we have received our maker, though we continue in a ſcandalous, fruitleſſe courſe of life No, there is a promiſe in the Sacrament, the Seale of the covenant of grace, to yeeld up our ſelves to God, to return to Chriſt againe with our duty, then we come as we ſhould doe, when we come thus diſpoſed; This for direction, *My beloved is mine, and I am my Beloveds.*

*Vſe. 4.*

*For comfort to the weaker Chriſtians, and to the whole Church.*

To proceed, to make an Uſe of Comfort to poore doubting Chriſtians, *I am my Beloveds*, is the voyce of the whole Church, that all rankes of Chriſtians (if they be true) may without preſumption take up. I have not ſo much Faith, ſo much love, ſo much grace, ſo much patience, as another (ſaith a poore Chriſtian) therefore I am none of Chriſts; but we muſt know that Chriſt hath in his Church of all ranks, and they are all his Spouſe, one as well as another, there is no exception, there is a little ſpirit of emulation, and a ſpice of envy in Chriſtians that are weaker, if they have not all that great meaſure of grace which they ſee in others, they feare they have none at all, as if there were no babes in Chriſts ſchoole, as well as men, and growne perſons.

*That the nature of faith is the ſame in the whole Church as in every particular member.*

Then againe, we ſee here the nature of Faith in the whole Church, it is the ſame that is in every particular, and the ſame in every particular, as it is in the whole Church. The whole Church ſaith,

SER. XX.

Gal. 2.

*I am my Beloveds, and my Beloved is mine,* I appropriate him, there is a ſpirit of appropriation in the whole, and there is ſo in each particular, Every Chriſtian may ſay with *Paul, I live by Faith in the Sonne of God, that hath loved me, and gave himſelfe for me,* and with *Thomas, my God and my Lord.*

The ground hereof is, becauſe they are all one in Chriſt, and there is one and the ſame Spirit in the whole Church and every particular Chriſtian. As in pipes, though of different ſounds, yet there is the ſame breath in them. So Chriſtians may have different ſounds from the greater or leſſer ſtrength of grace that is in the one and in the other, but all comes from the ſame breath,

Revel. 22.

the ſame Spirit. The Spirit in the Bride ſaith, Come, the whole Church ſaith it, and every particular Chriſtian muſt ſay it, becauſe as the body is acted by one Spirit, and makes but one naturall body, though conſiſting of many parts weaker and ſtronger: So ſhould there be a harmony in this myſticall body acted by that one Spirit of Chriſt, who ſo regards all, as if there were but one, and regards every one ſo, as he doth not forget the whole, *Sic omnibus attentus ut non detentus*, &c. Chriſt ſo attends to all, that he is not detained from any particular, and he ſo attends every particular that he is not reſtrained from all, there is the ſame love to all as to one, and to every one, as if there were no other, he ſo loves each one, that every Chriſtian may ſay as well as the whole Church, Chriſt is mine, and I am Chriſts.

In thoſe things that we call *Homogeneall*, there is the ſame nature in each quantity as in the whole:

whole: As there is the ſame nature in one drop of water as in the whole Ocean, all is water, and the ſame reſpect of a ſparke, and of all the element of fire: ſo Chriſt beares the ſame reſpect to the Church as to every particular, and to every particular as to the Church.

To come to make an Uſe of *Direction*, how to come to be able to ſay this, *I am my Beloveds, and my beloved is mine.* For anſwer hereto take notice in the firſt place from the dependence, Chriſt muſt be firſt ours before we can give our ſelves to him, therefore *we muſt dwell in the conſideration of Chriſts love*, this muſt direct and lead our method in this thing. Would we have our hearts to love Chriſt, to truſt in him, and to imbrace him? why then thinke what is he to us? begin there; nay and what we are; weake, and in our apprehenſion loſt: then goe to conſider his love, his conſtant love to his Church and children, *Whom he loves, he loves to the end.* We muſt warme our ſoules with the conſideration of the love of God in him to us, and this will ſtirre up our Faith to him backe again: *For we are more ſafe in that he is ours, than that we give our ſelves to him, we are more ſafe in his comprehending of us, than in our claſping and holding of him:* As we ſay of the mother and the childe both hold, but the ſafety of the childe is that the mother holds him: *If Chriſt once give himſelf to us, he will make good his own part alway, our ſafety is more on his ſide than on ours.* If ever we have felt the love of Chriſt, we may comfort our ſelves with the conſtancy and perpetuity thereof, though perhaps we finde not our affections warmed

*Vſe. 3.*
*How to have direction to be able to ſay with the Church, I am my Beloveds, &c.*

*1.*
*We muſt dwell in the conſideration of Chriſts love to us.*

Joh. 13. 1.

Gal 4 9.
Phil. 3. 12.

SER. XX.

med to him at all times, nor alike; yet the ſtrength of a Chriſtians comfort lyes in this, that firſt, *Chriſt is mine*, and then in the ſecond place, *that I am his*. Now (I ſay) that we may be able to maintaine this bleſſed tradition of giving our ſelves to Chriſt, Let us dwell in the conſideration of his love to us, & of the neceſſity that we have of him, how miſerable we are without him, poore, beggerly, in bondage to the Devill; therefore we muſt have him to recover us out of debt, & to enrich us: For Chriſts love carries him forth not onely to pay all our debts for us, but to enrich us, & *it is a protecting, preſerving love, till he brings us to Heaven his own place, where we ſhall ever be with him.* The conſideration of theſe things will warme our hearts, and for this purpoſe ſerves the Miniſtery.

2. *Dwell in the conſideration of our miſery without Chriſt, and our neceſſity to have him.*

3. *we muſt diligently attend the miniſtery of the Word.*

We ſhould therefore in the next place attend upon the Word, for this very end. Wherefore ſerves the Miniſtery? Among many others, this is one maine end, *to lay open the unſearcheable riches of Chriſt*; therein you have ſomething of Chriſt unfolded, of his Natures, Offices, and benefits we have by him, *Redemption, and freedome, and a right to all things in him*, the excellencies of another world; therefore attend upon the meanes of ſalvation, that we may know what riches we have in him, this will keep our affections cloſe to Chriſt, ſo as to ſay, *I am his*.

4. *we muſt labour every day what we can to contract, & endeavord to bring all our love to Chriſt.*

And labor we alſo every day more and more to bring all our love to him: we ſee in burning glaſſes, where the beames of the Sunne meet in one, how forcible they are, becauſe there is an union of the beames, in a little point. Let it be our

labour

labour that all the beames of our love may meet in Christ, that he may be as the Church saith, our *Beloved, My Beloved is mine, and I am my Beloveds* (saith she) as if the Church had no love out of Christ. And is it love lost? No, but as Christ is the Churches Beloved, so the Church is Christs love againe, as we see in this booke oft, *my Love, my Dove.* As all streams meet in the great Ocean, so let all our loves meet in Christ. *We may love other things, & we should doe so, but no otherwise than as they convey love to us from Christ, and may be means of drawing up our affections unto Christ.* We may love our friends, (and we ought to doe so) and other blessings of God, but how? No otherwise than as tokens of his love to us: we love a thing that our friend sends to us, O but it is as it doth convey his affection to us. So must we love all things as they come from Gods love to us in Christ.

*How farre we may love other things besides Christ.*

And indeed whatsoever wee have is a love-token, even our very afflictions themselves, Whom I love, I rebuke and chastise.

*That all we receive from Christ, even afflictions, are love-tokens.*

Againe, that wee may inflame our hearts with the love of Christ, as we are exhorted by *Iude*, Let us consider the vanity of all things that should entise us from Christ, and labour every day more and more to draw our affections from them, as wee are exhorted, *Psalm.* 45. *Hearken O daughter, and consider, and incline thine eare, forget also thine owne people, and thy Fathers house, so shall the king greatly desire thy beauty.* So if we will have Christ to delight in us that wee may say wee are his, let us labour to sequester our affections more and more from all earthly things,

*We must prepare our hearts in the love of Christ.* Jude vers. 21.

Ser. XX. that we may not have ſuch hearts, as Saint *James* ſpeakes of, adulterous hearts. O yee Adulterers and Adultereſſes, know you not that the love of the world is enmity with God?

Indeed there is reaſon for this exhortation, for all earthly things, they are all vaine and empty things, there is an emptineſſe in whatſoever is in the world (ſave Chriſt) therefore we ſhould not ſet our affections too much upon them; *A man cannot be wiſe in loving any thing but Chriſt, and what he loves for Chriſt.* Therefore let us follow that counſell, to draw our ſelves from our former company, acquaintance, pleaſures, delights, and vanities, wee cannot beſtow our love and our affections better than upon Chriſt. It is a happineſſe that we have ſuch affections, as joy, delight and love planted in us by God: and what a happineſſe is it, that wee ſhould have ſuch an excellent object to fill thoſe affections, yea to tranſcend and more than ſatisfie them? Therefore the Apoſtle wiſheth that they may know all the demenſions of Gods love in Chriſt, there is a *height,* Eph. 3. 18. *breadth, length, and depth of the love of God.*

And let us thinke of the demenſions, the height, breadth, and depth of our miſery out of Chriſt. The more excellent our natures are, the more miſerable they are if not changed; for looke what degree of excellency we have (if it be not advanced in Chriſt) wee have ſo much miſery being out of him; therefore let us labour to ſee this as to value our being in him, ſo to be able upon good grounds to ſay, *I am my Beloveds, and my Beloved is mine.*

Againe,

Serm. XX.

Againe, let us labour to walke in the light of a ſanctified knowledge to be attained by the Goſpel; for as it is, *Iohn* 1. 3. *the end of all our preaching is to aſſure Chriſt to the ſoule,* that we may be able to ſay without deceiving our own ſoules, *I am my Beloveds, and my Beloved is mine.* All preaching (I ſay) is for this end, the terrour of the Law and the diſcovery of corruption is to drive us out of our ſelves to him, and then to provoke us to grow up into him more and more. Therefore ſaith *Iohn, All our preaching is, that we may have fellowſhip with the Father & the Sonne, and they with us:* And what doth he make an evidence of that fellowſhip, *Walking in the light, as he is light,* or elſe we are lyars; he is bold in plaine tearmes to give us the lye, to ſay we are Chriſts, and have communion with the Father and the Sonne, when yet we walk in darkneſſe, in ſinnes againſt conſcience, in wilfull ignorance, the darkneſſe of an evill life, we have no communion with Chriſt; therefore if we will have communion with him, let us walke in the light & labour to be lightſome in our underſtandings, to have a great deale of knowledge, and then to walke anſwerable to that light and revelation that wee have. Thoſe that live in ſinnes againſt conſcience, and are friends to the darkneſſe of ignorance, of an evill life, Oh they never thinke of the fellowſhip with Chriſt and with God, theſe things are meer riddles to them, they have no hope of them, or if any, their hope is in vaine, they barre themſelves of ever having comfortable communion with Chriſt here, much leſſe ſhall they enjoy him hereafter in Heaven.

1 Joh. 1 3.
1 Joh. 5. 13.

*The maine end of preaching.*

1 Joh. 1. 7.

SER. XX.

*The excellency of a Christian walking in divine light above others.*

Therefore labour every day more and more to grow rich in knowledge, to get light and to walke in that light; to which end pray with the holy Apostle, *Ephes.* 1. *That you may have the Spirit of Revelation*, that excellent Spirit of God to reveale the things of God, that we may have the light discovered to us.

What a world of comfort hath a Christian that hath light in him, and walks in that light, above another man, whether he live or dye. the light brings him into fellowship with the Father of lights: He that hath this light knowes his condition and his way, and whither he goeth when he dyeth, he knowes in what condition he dyeth, and upon what grounds. The very light of nature is comfortable, much more that of grace; therefore labour to grow daily more and more in the knowledge and obedience of the light.

*A serious exhortation for such who are not yet in Christ, to come in.*

All professors of the Gospell are either such as are not Christs, or such as are his; for such as are not yet, that you may be provoked to draw to fellowship with Christ: Doe but consider you are as branches cut off, that will wither and dye and be cast into the fire, unlesse you be grafted into the living stocke, Christ; you are as naked persons in a storme, not cloathed with any thing to stand against the storme of Gods wrath, let this force you to get into Christ.

*That in the Gospell Christ by the Ministery offereth himselfe unto all.*

And next for encouragement consider, Christ offered himselfe to all in the Gospell, and that is the end of the Ministery to bring Christ and your soules together, to make a spirituall marriage, to lay open his riches and to draw you to him:

him: If you confeſſe your ſinnes hee will forgive them, and you ſhall have mercy, *He relieves thoſe that are wearied and heavy laden,* and bids thoſe come to him that are thirſty, *Chriſt came to ſeeke, and to ſave that which was loſt*, Chriſt offers himſelfe in mercy to the worſt ſoule. SER. XX. 1 Joh. 19. Prov. 28. Mat. 11. ult. Iſa. 55. 1.

Therefore if there be any that have lived in evill courſes, in former times, conſider that upon repentance all ſhall be forgotten, and as a miſt ſcattered away and caſt into the bottome of the Sea. Chriſt offers himſelfe to you, theſe are the times, this is the houre of grace, now the water is ſtirred for you to enter: doe but entertaine Chriſt, and deſire that he may be yours to rule you and guide you, and all will be well for the time to come.

Doe not object *I am a loathſome creature full of rebellions.* *Object.*

*Chriſt doth not match with you, becauſe you are good, but to make you good*; Chriſt takes you not with any dowry, all that he requires is to confeſſe your beggery, and to come with emptineſſe. Hee takes us not becauſe we are clean, but becauſe he will purge us, he takes us in our bloud when he firſt takes us. Let none deſpaire either for want of worth or of ſtrength, Chriſt ſeeth that for ſtrength we are dead, and for worth we are enemies; but he gives us both ſpirituall ſtrength & worth, takes us neare to himſelfe, and enricheth us. Let none therefore be diſcouraged, it is our office thus to lay open and offer the riches of Chriſt: If you will not come in, but love your ſinfull courſes more than Chriſt, then you periſh in your bloud, and we *Anſw.* Ezek. 19. Eph. 5. 27.

SER. XX. Gal. 2.

free our hands, and may free our ſoules from the guilt thereof; therefore as you love your owne ſoules, come in at length and ſtand out no longer.

*Exhortation to them that have given themſelves to Chriſt.*

And for thoſe that have in ſome meaſure given themſelves up to Chriſt, and can ſay, *Hee is mine and I am his*, let them goe on with comfort, and never be diſcouraged for the infirmities that hang about them: For one part of Chriſts Office is to purge his Church by his Spirit more and more, *Epheſ.* 5. 27. not to caſt her away for her infirmities, *but to waſh and cleanſe it more and more till it be a glorious Spouſe like himſelfe*: For if the husband will by the bond of nature, beare with the infirmities of the wife (as the weaker veſſell) doth not Chriſt binde himſelfe by that which he accounts us bound? Is there more love, and mercy, and pitty in us to thoſe that wee take neare us, than there is in Chriſt to us? What a moſt blaſphemous thought were this to conceive ſo? Onely let us take heed of being in league with ſinne, for we cannot give our ſoules to Chriſt, and to ſinfull courſes too; Chriſt will allow of no bigamy or double marriage, where he hath any thing to doe, wee muſt have ſingle hearts reſolving though I fall, yet I purpoſe to pleaſe Chriſt, and to goe on in a good converſation; and if our hearts tell us ſo, daily infirmities ought not to diſcourage us, wee have helps enough for theſe. Firſt, Chriſt bids us aske forgiveneſſe, and then we have the mercy of Chriſt to beare with weaker veſſels; then his Advocation, hee is now in Heaven to plead for us; if wee were perfect, we needed not that office:

1 Joh. 2. 2.

Let

Let none be diſcouraged therefore, but let us labour more and more, that we may be able to comprehend in ſome meaſure the love of Chriſt, ſo will all duties come off ſweetly and eaſily, and then we ſhall be inabled to ſuffer all things, not onely willingly but cheerfully, and rejoyce in them. Love is of the nature of fire, which as it ſevereth and conſumeth all that is oppoſite, all droſſe and dregs, and diſſolves coldneſſe: ſo it quickens and makes active and lively, it hath a kinde of conſtraining force, a ſweet violence (as the Apoſtle ſaith) *the love of Chriſt conſtraineth*, 2 *Cor.* 5. 24.

SER. XX. *That to ſuffer and to facilitate all duties, we ſhould labour more and more for the love of Chriſt.*

Let a man that loves the Lord Jeſus Chriſt in ſincerity, be called to part with his life, he will yeeld it as a ſacrifice with comfort. Come what wil, it is welcome, when we are inflamed with the love of Chriſt, and the more we ſuffer, the more we find his love; for he reſerves the manifeſtation of his love moſt for times of ſuffering, and the more we find the manifeſtation of his love, the more we love him backe againe, and rejoyce in ſuffering for him that wee love ſo, whether they be duties of obedience, active or paſſive, doing or ſuffering, all comes off with abundance of cheerfulneſſe and eaſe, where the love of Chriſt is, that the ſoule can ſay, *I am my Beloveds, and my Beloved is mine*, nothing in the world is able to make ſuch a ſoule miſerable. It followes,

*He feedeth among the Lillies.*

The Church here ſhewes where Chriſt feeds. *Queſt.* But the queſtion is, *Whether it bee the feeding of the Church and people that is here meant, or whether he feeds himſelfe.* For anſwer, he both feeds his *Anſw.*

SER. XX.

Church among the Lillies, and delights himselfe to be there; the one followes the other, especially it is meant of the Church, those that are his, hee feeds them among the Lillies.

*How?*

*What meant by Christs feeding among the Lillies.*

Lillies are such kind of flowers as require a great deale of nourishment, and grow best in vallies and fat ground; therefore when she saith, *he feeds among the Lillies*, the meaning is, *he feeds his Church and people in fat pasture*; as sheep in such grounds as are sweet and fruitfull, such are his holy Word and the Communion of Saints, these are especially the pastures wherein he feeds his Church. The holy truths of God are the food of the soule, whereby it is cherished and nourished up to life everlasting. This whole Booke is a kinde of Pastorall (to understand the Word a little better) a Song of a Beloved concerning a Beloved; therefore Christ in many places of this Booke, he takes upon him the terme & carriage (as it were) of a loving Shepherd, who labours to finde out for his sheep the fatteſt, fruitfulleſt, best and sweeteſt pastures, that they may grow up as Calves of the stall, as it is *Malachi* 4.2. that they may grow and be well liking.

You have (to give ligh to this place) a phrase somewhat like to this, where he followes the point more at large, *Cant.* 1.7. the Church there prayes to Christ, *Tell me, O thou whom my soule loveth, where thou feedeſt, where thou makeſt thy flocks to rest at noone*; Those that are coming up in the Church, desire to know with whom they may joyne, and what truths they may embrace.

Cant. 1.7.

*Tell*

*Tell me where thou feedeſt, and where thou makeſt thy flocks to reſt at noone*; that is, in the greateſt heat and ſtorme of perſecution, as at noone day the Sunne is hotteſt: *For why ſhould I be as one that turns aſide by the flocks of thy companions?* that is, by thoſe that are not true friends, that are falſe ſhepherds, why ſhould I be drawne away by them? I deſire to feed where thou feedeſt among thy ſheep. Why ſhould I be as one that turnes aſide by the flocks of thoſe that are Emulators to thee? as Antichriſt is to Chriſt. Thus the Church puts forth to Chriſt, whereunto Chriſt replyes, verſe 8. *If thou know not, O thou faireſt among women, goe thy way forth by the footſteps of the flocks, and feed thy Kids beſides the ſhepherds tents*; that is, if thou know not, goe thy way forth, get thee out of thy ſelfe, out of the world, out of thy former courſe, put thy ſelfe forward, ſtay not complaining, go on, put thy ſelfe to endeavour, goe thy way forth, whither? *in the footſteps of the flocks*; ſee the ſteps of Chriſtians in the beſt times of the Church in former times, tread in the ſteps of thoſe that lived in the beſt ages of the Church, *feed thy kids*, thy Chriſtians, *beſides the Shepherds tents*, the beſt Shepherds: Marke where the Apoſtles and Prophets feed their ſheep, there feed thou, and marke the footſteps of the flock that have lived in the beſt times; for of all times ſince the Apoſtles and Prophets, we muſt follow thoſe Virgin beſt times. All Churches are ſo far true Churches as they have Conſanguinity with the Primitive, Apoſtolicall and Propheticall Churches.

Therefore *we are now to goe out by the footſteps of*

SER. XX. *of the flocke.* Marke the footsteps of former Christians, *Abraham*, *Moses*, and *David*, and in Christs time, of *John*, *Peter*, and the rest, blessed Saints, walke as they walked, goe their way, and *feed your selves by the shepheards tents*: marke the shepheards where they have their tents. So these words have reference to the *Prophetical*, especially to the *Evangelicall* times, whereunto we must conforme our selves, for the latter times are Apostate times. After a certaine season the Church kept not her purity, which the Scriptures foretold directly, that we should not take scandall at it, the Church did fall to a kinde of admiration of Antichrist, and embraced doctrines of devils; therefore now we must not follow these companies that lead into by paths, contrary to the Apostolicall wayes, but see wherein our Church agrees with the Apostolicall Churches and truth, and embrace no truth for the food of our soules, but that we finde in the Gospell. For Antichrist feeds his flocke with winde, and with poyson, and with empty things. For what hath been the food in Popery? sweet and goodly titles, as if they poore soules had the best Pastors in the world, when as they administer to them nothing but that which will be the bane of their soules, full of poyson and fraud. This is spoken to unfold that place which gives light to this, spoken of the pastorall care of Christ, *he feeds his flocke among the Lillies*, plentifully and sweetly. From hence may be briefly observed, first,

1 Tim. 4.

*Observ.* *That we need feeding as well as breeding in Christianity*

*That Christ feeds as well as breeds.*

And we have need of feeding, as well as breeding.

ding: where doſt thou feed? that is, build up thy children, and goe on with the worke begun in them. We have need to be fed after wee are bred, and Chriſt (anſwerable to our exigence and neceſſity) he feeds as well as breeds, and that Word which is the ſeed to beget us, is that which feeds too. What is the ſeed of the new Birth? the Word of God, the holy promiſes they are the ſeed, the Spirit mingling with them, whereby a Chriſtian is borne, and being borne is cheriſhed and bred; therefore, *As new borne Babes*, ſaith the Apoſtle, 1 *Pet.* 2.1. *deſire the ſincere milk of the Word, that you may grow thereby.* So that the ſame thing is both the ſeed of a Chriſtian, and that which breeds him, the bleſſed truth and promiſes of God.

1 Pet. 1. 23.

*Queſt.* *If you aske, why we muſt grow up and bee fed ſtill?*

*Anſw.* 1. *In regard of daily new guilt.* Doe but aske your owne ſoules, whether there be not a perpetuall renewing of corruption, which ſtill breaks out into new guilt every day. Therefore we have need to feed every day anew upon the promiſes, upon old promiſes with new affections, ſomewhat breakes out ever and anon, which abaſeth the ſoule of a Chriſtian, that makes him goe with a ſharpe appetite to the bleſſed truths that feed his ſoule.

*Anſw.* 2. *Becauſe we need much ſtrength.* And then againe, we need a great deale of ſtrength, which is maintained by feeding, beſides the guilt of the ſoule, there needs ſtrength for duty, which muſt be fetched from the bleſſed Word of God, and the comforts thence; whereby

SER. XX.

*Answ. 3. In regard variety of temptation needs variety of wisdome.*

whereby we are able to withstand and resist, to stand and doe all that we doe.

And *then we are set upon by variety of temptations within and without, which require variety of wisdome and strength*, all which must be gotten by feeding, and therefore you see a Christian for his subsistene and being hath need of a feeding, cherishing, and maintaining still by the sweet and blessed directions and promises out of the Word of God.

*A refutation of their error who slight religious walking with God and the exercise of Religion.*

Therefore you may see what kinde of Athiesti call creatures those are; and how much they are to be regarded that turne off all with a *compendium* in Religion, tush if we know that we must love God above all, and our neighbours as our selves, and that Christ dyed for all, we know enough, more then we can practise, they thinke these *compendiums* will serve the turne, as if there were not a necessity of growing still further & further in distinct knowledge. Alas the soul needs to be fed continually, it will stagger else and be unsufficient to stand against temptation, or to performe duties

A second generall point out of the text is this, *That as Christ feedeth still his flocke and people, so he feeds them fully, plentifully, and sweetly among the Lillies.* There are saving truths enough, there is an All-sufficiency in the Booke of God, what need we goe out to mans inventions, seeing there is a fulnesse and All-sufficiency of truth there? Whatsoever is not in that is winde, or poyson; in the Word is a full kinde of feeding. In former times when they had not the Scriptures, and the comforts of them to feed on, what did the poore soules

ſoules then? and what doe thoſe remaining in Popery feed on? upon ſtones (as it were.) There was a dreame of an holy man in thoſe times (divers hundred years agone) that he ſaw one having a deale of manchet to feed on, and yet all the while poore wretch he fed on ſtones. What folly and miſery is this, when there are delicate things to feed on, to gnaw upon ſtones? and what is all the Schoole learning almoſt (except one or two that had better ſpirits than the reſt) but a gnawing upon ſtones, barren diſtinctions, empty things, that hath no ſubſtance in them? they had the Scriptures (though they were locked up in Latine, an unknowne tongue) they had the ſweet paſtures of Chriſt to feed on, and yet all this while they fed (as it were) on ſtones.

*Our happineſſe to be borne under ſuch plenty of ſpirituall food.*

*This ſhould ſhew us likewiſe our owne blſſedneſſe, that live in theſe times wherein the ſtreames of the Goſpell run abundantly, ſweetly, and pleaſantly.* There is a fulneſſe among us (even in the ſpirits of the worſe ſort) there is a fulneſſe almoſt to loathing of that heavenly Manna; but thoſe ſoules who ever were acquainted with the neceſſity of it rather find a want then a fulneſſe, and ſtill deſire to grow up to a further deſire, that as they have plentifull meanes, ſo they may have plentifull affections after, and ſtrength by thoſe means: let us know our owne happineſſe in theſe times. Is it not a comfort to know where to feed and to have paſtures to goe to without ſuſpicion of poiſon? that we may feed our ſelves with comforts fully without feare of bane, or noiſome mingling

SER. XX.

ling of *Coloquintida* in the pot, which would diſreliſh all the reſt? to know that there are truths that we may feed on ſafely? This the Church in the former place, *Cant.* 1. 6, 7. accounted a great priviledge, *O ſhew me where thou feedeſt at noone.* In the greateſt heat of perſecution, that I may feed among them: ſo then it is a great priviledge to know where to feed, and ſo to be eſteemed, that thereby we may be ſtirred up to be thankfull for our owne good, and to improve theſe priviledges to our ſoules comfort.

*Obſerv.*

But the ſecond branch that muſt be touched a little, is, *That there is fulneſſe nowhere but in Gods houſe, and that there and there onely is that which ſatisfieth the ſoule with fatneſſe and ſweetneſſe.*

*That the rebukes of Scripture are ſweet.*

*Nay not onely the Promiſes, but the very rebukes of ſcripture are ſweet*, the rebukes of a friend, they feed the ſoule, for we have many corruptions which hinder our Communion with God, ſo that a Chriſtian delights to have his corruptions rebuked; for he knowes if he leave them, he ſhall grow into further Communion with Chriſt, wherein ſtands his happineſſe in this world, and the fulneſſe of his happineſſe in the world to come.

If this be ſo, let us know then, that when we come to Religion we loſe not the ſweetneſſe of our lives, but onely tranſlate them to a farre more excellent and better condition. Perhaps we feed before upon vaine Authors, upon (as it were) gravell, vaine company, but now we have our delight (and perhaps finde more pleaſure) in better things,

things, in ſtead of that which fed our idle fancie (vaine Treatiſes and the like) now wee have holy truths to delight our ſoule. *Beleeve it, a Chriſtian never knowes what comfort is to purpoſe, till he be down right and ſincere in Religion.* Therefore *Auſtin* ſaith of himſelfe, *Lord I have wanted thy ſweetneſſe ever long, I ſee all my former life* (that I thought had ſuch ſweetneſſe in it) *was nothing at all but huskes, empty things, now I know where ſweetneſſe is, it is in the Word and Truth.* Therefore let us not miſconceive of Religion, as of a mopiſh and dull thing, wherein we muſt loſe all comfort, if we give our ſelves over to the ſtudy thereof; muſt we ſo? muſt we loſe our comfort? No, we have no comfort till we be religious indeed: Chriſt feeds not his among thornes, and bryers and ſtinking weeds, but among Lillies; doſt thou thinke he feeds thee among unſavoury, harſh, fretting, galling things? No, *he feeds among Lillies.* Therefore when thou commeſt to Religion, thinke that thou commeſt to comfort, to refreſh thy ſoule, let us make uſe of this for our ſoules comfort to make us in love more with the wayes of Chriſt.

*How Chriſt the true Shepherd feeds, is further explained.*

Now to ſeale this further, ſee what the Scripture ſaith in ſome parellel places, *Pſal. 23. The Lord is my Shepheard*, andwhat is the uſe that *David* preſently makes hereof? *Why, I ſhall want nothing*, he will feed me plentifully & abundantly, the whole *Pſalme* is nothing but a commenting upon that word, *the Lord is my Shepheard*, how doth he performe the duty of a ſhepheard? *He makes me to lye down in greene paſtures, and leads me*

SER. XX.

*me by the ſtill waters*, it is not onely meant of the body, but of the ſoule chiefly, *he reſtoreth my ſoule*, that is, when my ſoule languiſheth and is ready to faint, he reſtores it, and gives me as it were a new ſoule, he refreſheth it. We ſay recreation is the creating of a thing new: ſo he reſtores my ſoule, he gives me my ſoul anew with freſh comforts? Thus the bleſſed Shepherd doth, and how? Becauſe, *he feeds among the Lillies*, the promiſes of the Goſpell; then he doth not onely do good to the body and ſoule; but he guides all our wayes, all our goings out, *He leads us in the paths of Righteouſneſſe*, and why? b cauſe I deſerve ſo much at his hands? No, for his owne name ſame, becauſe he hath a love to me, becauſe he hath purchaſed me with his blood, and given his life for his ſheep, hath bought me ſo deare, though there be no worth in me. He goes on, though *I walke through all temptations and troubles*, which are as *the valley of the ſhadow of death*, that is, where there is nothing but diſconſolation and miſery; *yet I will feare none ill, thou with thy rod and ſtaffe doſt comfort me.* If I, as a wandring ſheep, venture to goe out of the way, thou out of thy care being a ſweet and loving Shepherd wilt pull me in with thy hooke and ſtaffe againe, he hath not care only to feed us but to govern us alſo. What a ſweet Shepheard and Saviour have we in covenant that deals thus with us? and ſo he proceeds, *thou wilt prepare my table in the preſence of mine enemies*, and for the time to come he promiſeth himſelfe as much, that God as he hath been a Shepheard,

for

(for the preſent) to provide all things neceſſary for body and ſoule and guidance, ſo ſurely the goodneſſe of the Lord ſhall follow me all the dayes of my life, for hee is a perpetuall Shepheard, he will not leave us till he hath brought us to Heaven. Thus we ſee in this place the ſweet care of Chriſt.

The like place you have, *Iſa.* 40. 11. *He ſhall feed his flocke like a ſhepheard; he ſhall gather the Lambs with his armes, and carry them in his boſome, and ſhall gently lead thoſe that are with young*: So he leads them into the paſtures, and feeds them plentifully and ſweetly, not onely with ſweet things, but with a tender care, which is ſweeter. As a Shepheard he takes into his boſome the poore lambs that cannot walke themſelves, and the ſheepe that are heavy with young, he cares for them, *he gently leads them* that are poore, weake Chriſtians that ſtruggle and conflict with many temptations and corruptions, Chriſt hath a tender care of them, he carries them (as it were) in his boſome and in his armes, and leads them gently; for indeed all Chriſts ſheep are weake, every one hath ſomewhat to complaine of, therefore he hath a tender care, hee feeds them tenderly and ſweetly, or elſe they might periſh.

Another place (notable for this purpoſe) ſee *Ezek.* 34. 14. wherein you have the ſame metaphor from a loving Shepheard; and it is but a comment upon the Text; therefore being parallel places they may help our memories: *I will feed them in good paſtures upon the high mountaines*

SER. XX.

*taines of Israel, there shall their fold be, there shall they lye in a good field, in a fat pasture, I will feed my flocke and cause them to lye downe, saith the Lord God, I will seeke that which is lost, and bring back that which was driven away, I will binde up that which was broken, and strengthen that which is sicke, and destroy the fat and the strong, & feed them with judgement.* Those that are Christs true sheep have somewhat to complaine of, either they are sicke, or broken, or driven away, somewhat is amisse or other; but Christs care preventeth all the necessities of his sheep, he hath a fit salve for all their sores: And (to apply this to the businesse in hand) doth not Christ feed us among the Lillies? doth he not now feed us with his owne body and bloud in the Sacrament? would you have better food? *My body is meat indeed, and my blood is drinke indeed,* that is, it is the only meat (with an *Emphasis*) the onely meat and drinke that our soules could feed upon, God gave his Sonne to death to shed his bloud for my sinnes. What would become of the hunger-bitten, thirsty soule that is stung with Satan and his temptations, were it not for the bloud of Christ to quench our thirst, and the body of Christ given by the Father to death for sin? were it not that the soule could thinke upon this, where were the comfort of the soule? All this is represented to us here in the Sacrament, we feed on the body and bloud of Christ spiritually, and are refreshed thereby, as verily as our bodies are refreshed with the bread and wine. For God doth not feed us with empty symbols and representations, but with things

Ser. XX.

things themſelves, that the ſoule which comes prepared by Faith, is partaker of Chriſt crucified, and is knit to him though now in Heaven, there is as ſure an union and communion betweene Chriſt and the Chriſtian ſoule, as there is betweene the food and the body when it is once digeſted.

Therefore let us come to this bleſſed, to this ſweet food of our ſoules with hungry appetites, and thankfull hearts that God hath given us the beſt comforts of his Word, and fed us with the ſweet comfort of the Sacraments as a Seale of the Word. We ſhould even ſpend our lives much in thankfulneſſe to God for this, that he will feed us ſo ſweetly, that thinks nothing is good enough for our food, but his owne ſelfe with his owne gracious Word and Truth. Thus we ſhould be very thankfull unto god, and now at this time labour to get hungry appetites fit for this bleſſed food to receive it.

*How ſhall we doe that?*

*How to get hungry appetites to the Sacrament.*

Thinke ſeriouſly of the former part of thy life, and this weeke paſt. For Chriſt the food of the ſoule reliſheth well with the ſowre herbs of Repentance. Let us ſtir up in our hearts repentance for our ſinnes, and ſorrow in the conſideration of our own corrupt nature and life, and when we have felt our corruptions, and have the ſenſe of our want, then Chriſt will be ſweet to us, the *Paſchall Lamb* was to be eaten with ſowre herbs, ſo Chriſt our Paſſeover muſt be eaten with Repentance.

I

*To thinke ſeriouſly of former and preſent ſins.*

Then withall there muſt be purging, there are

2.

*There muſt be purging.*

SER. XX.

James 1. 21
1 Pet. 2. 1.

many things which clog the ſtomacke, come not with worldly wicked, malacious affections which puffe up the ſoule, *But lay aſide* ( as the Apoſtle wiſheth ) *all guile, malice, and ſuperfluity*, empty the ſoule of all ſinne and prepoſſeſſing thoughts or Affections.

3. *Conſider the neceſſity of ſpirituall ſtrength.*

And then conſider the neceſſity of ſpirituall ſtrength, that we have need to grow up more and more in Chriſtianity, to be feeding ſtill, we have need of ſtrong Faith and ſtrong aſſurance that Chriſt is ours, and that wee are his. Let us often frequent this ordinance, and come prepared as we ſhould, and we ſhall finde Chriſt making good his owne ordinance in his owne beſt time: ſo as we ſhall be able to ſay in truth of heart experimentally and feelingly with the Church, *My Beloved is mine, and I am his, he feedeth among the Lillies.*

AN

# An Alphabetical Index of the Special Points contained in this *Book*.


A

*Accuſations.*

ACcuſations of Satan, how to anſwer them, p. 10

*Actions.*

*Actions* holy, rightly performmed bring increaſe of ſtrength and comfort, 180

*Actions* of Chriſt all pre.ious, p. 343

*Affections.*

Our *Affections* ought not to cleave to baſe things, 45

*Affections* are like their objects, 46

*Affections* of Chriſtians are in Chriſts Government, p. 238

*Affections*, where it is in truth, it will diſcover it ſelfe by outward expreſſions, p. 243

True *Affection* are ſerious in the things of God, p. 274

*Affections*, Chriſt the beſt object for them to be ſpent on, p. 352

*Afflictions.*

*Afflictions* a ſigne of Chriſts love, p. 14, 15

*Afflictions* are a meanes to make us prize Chriſt, therefore we are not to murmure at them, p. 326

Chriſt never more neare his Church then when it is in *Affliction*, p. 312

Sweeteſt communion with

Christ is under the greatest *Afflictions*, *ibid.*

*Alphonsus.*

A story of King *Alphonsus*, 351.

*Appetite.*

*Appetite* how to be procured to Christ and spirituall things, 66.67

*Acknowledge.*

We should as well *Acknowledge* that which is good in us as that which is evill, p. 9.

*Apostatize.*

Why so many *Apostatize* under the Word, p. 118.

*Beauty*, See *Faireneſſe.*

*Beauty* wherein it consisteth, p. 306

*Beauty* of Christ is especially spirituall, p. 307.

Christ is a most *beautifull* person, p. 307.

*Beloved.*

How we come to be Christs *Beloved*, p. 402.

*Beleeving.*

*Beleeving* in Christ more glorifies God, than if we were as pure as *Adam*, p. 181.

C

*Calling.*

Doing things in our generall or particular *Calling* with respect to God and not to man will arme us against all discouragements, p. 210.

*Christ.*

*Christs* presence is more and more desired, where there is true grace, p. 20, 21.

*Christs* presence why earnestly desired of the Church. p. 21.

How to know *Christ* is present with us, p. 36.

*Christs* presence is an Heaven to Christians, p. 37.

Having *Christs* presence we need feare nothing, p. 38.

*Christ* is our brother. p. 39. 151.

We ought not to be ashamed of *Christ*, and his cause. p. 40.

The comfort of *Christs* being our Brother, p. 40. 41.

*Christ* onely is the Churches Husband, p. 44.

*Christ* being our Husband our sinnes or unworthinesse should not discourage us, p. 45.

*Christ* how to know we are espoused to him, p. 47. &c.

We must be ruled by *Christ*, p. 46.

*Christ* is to be followed in all conditions. p. 47.

Directions for such who are not yet in *Christ*. p. 48.

Excellency of their condition who are one with *Christ*, p. 48.

*Christ* whersoever he comes, he comes not empty, p. 53.

Com-

Communion with *Christ* to be endeavoured after, p. 54
*Christ* and the Church mutually feast each other, p. 61
*Christ* resembled to a feast in sundry respects, p. 62
There is that in *Christ* which answereth to all our wants, p. 63
In *Christ* we enjoy choice rarities, p. 63
In *Christ* there is an overflowing of all that is good for our good, p. 73
How *Christ* is our friend and we his, p. 71
Why *Christ* sometimes useth us hardly, p. 73
*Christ* is a constant friend, p. 74
*Christ* still desires a further and further communion with his Church, p. 120
*Christ* why he withdrawes himselfe from us, p. 121, &c.
*Christ* how to know he dwels in us, p. 133, &c.
We should cherish good conceits of *Christ*, p. 135
To labour to entertaine *Christ* p. 138
Benefits of entertaining *Christ*, p. 140, 141
*Christ* hath never enough of his Church till he hath it in heaven. p. 146
*Christs* low stooping for the good of our soules, should quicken us to receive him, p. 150
All love scattered in relations is united in *Christ*, p. 151
*Christs* love to his Church is free, tender and invincible, p. 155
*Christs* love is incomparable, p. 162
*Christs* wonderfull love set forth in his low abasement for us, p. 164
*Christ* resembled to a Dove, p. 166
How *Christs* righteousnesse made ours, p. 174, 175
*Christ* looks not upon us in our present imperfections, but as he meanes to perfect the worke of grace in us, p. 178
Communion whith *Christ* is not easily attained, p. 185
Communion with *Christ* hindred by false reasonings and excuses. p. 186
*Christ* doth sometimes leave his Church & particular members, p. 218. &c.
The kinds of *Christs* leaving his Church, *ibid.*
Ends why *Christ* leaves his Church, p. 220
The cause of *Christs* withdrawing comfort from us rests in our selves, p. 226
*Christ* never leaves his totally, p. 228, 223,
*Christs* grace is the cause of ours, p. 228, 229

*Christ* wonderfull in his goodneſſe to his Saints, *p.* 240
Hearts of Gods children ſometimes faile them for want of *Chriſts* preſence, *page* 246 &c.
*Chriſts* preſence and abſence makes the ſummer and winter of a Chriſtian ſoules, *p.* 248
We ſhould depend upon *Chriſt* when he ſeemes to be abſent, *p.* 254
We ought to be in love with *Chriſts* government, *p.* 226
*Chriſt* is a moſt beautifull perſon, *p.* 307
*Chriſts* beauty is ſpirituall, *ibid.*
*Chriſt* is the chiefeſt of all, *p.* 309
All our fulneſſe comes from *Chriſt*, *p.* 309
*Chriſt* ſet forth by all the excellencies of the creatures, *p.* 310
*Chriſt* only was King, Prieſt, and Propher, 310, 311, 312
Of *Chriſts* Kingly, Prieſtly, and Propheticall offices, *page* 311, 312
*Chriſt* ſet forth in his graces of mercy and meekneſſe, *page* 315
*Chriſt* hath the preheminence in all things, *p.* 315, 316.
*Chriſts* excellency is the Churches, *p.* 316
*Chriſts* ſupereminent excellencies ought to draw thoſe to *Chriſt* who are not yet in him, *p.* 316, 317
Two forcible reaſons to draw us to Chriſt, *p.* 317
Our ſinnes ſhould not hinder our comming to Chriſt *ibid.*
Chriſtians juſtified in their choice of Chriſt, *p.* 335, 336, 337
Folly of thoſe who refuſe *Chriſt*, and chuſe baſe tranſitory things, *p.* 318, 319
The woefull eſtate of thoſe that accept not of *Chriſt*, being offered them, *page* 319, 320
Wee muſt have reſpect to *Chriſt* in choice and love to other things, 321, 322
*Chriſt*, the meanes how to highly eſteeme of him. *p.* 322, &c.
Exalting of *Chriſt* in our hearts is a ſtrong preſervative againſt ſin, deſpaire, and all diſcouragements, *p.* 322
Folly of delaying to ſeeke *Chriſt* till old age, *p.* 324
How *Chriſts* death is a ſufficient ſatisfaction for the ſins of the whole world, *p.* 328
*Chriſt* hath many excellencies in him, *p.* 331
It ſhould be the care of Chriſtians to ſtudy the ſeverall excellencies of Chriſt, *p.* 331, 332

Sights

Sights of *Christ* that God shewes to the soules of Christians, *p.* 332, 333

Sights of Faith which the soule frames to it selfe of Christ, *ibid.*

*Christ*, why compared to an head of gold, *p.* 334

*Christ* hath cleare eyes able to discerne all things, *p.* 337, 338

*Christs* doctrine is sweet and sound, *p.* 341

All *Christs* actions are precious, *p.* 343

*Christs* wayes are all constant and firme, *p.* 344

*Christ* every way considered is altogether lovely, *p.* 349

*Christ* most lovely in his abasements for us, *p.* 350

*Christs* righteousnesse ought perfectly to be trusted to, *p.* 351

*Christ* is the best object for our best affections to bee placed on, *p.* 352

*Christ* how to know we love him, *p.* 353, &c.

A desire of the appearance of *Christ* is a signe of our flaming love to him, *p.* 356, 357

How to attaine to an high esteeme of Christ, *p.* 159, 160

Ends of the Churches setting forth Christs excellencies, *p.* 363, &c

*Christs* excellencies meditated on will justifie our paines in the exercises of Religion, *page* 366

Christians have more cause to boast of their portion in *Christ*, then worldlings of the world, *p.* 369

*Christ* will not be long absent from his Church, *p.* 385

We must be first united to *Christs* person before we can receive comfort and communion of his graces, *p.* 389

*Christ* and Christians have a mutuall propriety in each other *p.* 392

There is a mutuall love, familiarity and likenesse betweene Christ and Christians, *p.* 393, 394

Christ and Christians have a mutuall care of each others good, *p.* 394

There is a mutuall complacency betweene Christ and the Church, *p.* 395

They that are *Christs* will be resolute in owning his cause, *ibid.*

That in order of nature *Christ* is ours first, though not in order of knowing, *p.* 398

How *Christ* comes to be ours, *p.* 399

*Christ* being ours we have all things, *ibid.*

*Christ* being ours it should make us be contented with our con-

condition whatſoever it bee, p. 400.
*Chriſts* excellencies to be ſtudied, p 401.
How we come to be Chriſts beloved, p. 403, 430.
Our giving up our ſelves to *Chriſt* is an evidence that Chriſt is ours, p. 406
Reaſons why *Chriſt* muſt bee firſt given to us before wee can give our ſelves over to him, p. 410, 411.
*Chriſt* hath the ſame care of every particular Chriſtian as of the whole Church, p. 414.
How to be inabled to love and embrace *Chriſt*, p. 415
Love to *Chriſt* how it may ſtand with love to other things, p. 417.
*Chriſt* feeds his Church among fat paſtures, p. 406 &c.
*Chriſt* feeds as well as breeds his Church ibid
*Chriſt* feeds his Chnrch plenciſully and ſweetly, p. 428.
Motives to entice, thoſe who are not yet in *Chriſt* to come in, p. 420

Church.

*Church* in what reſpects compared to a garden, p. 12
*Church* cared for and protected of God, 16, 17.
The *Churches* diſpoſition is to pleaſe Chriſt her Husband, p. 22, 23.
The *Church* gives all to Chriſt, p. 24.
The *Churches* royall deſcent, p. 41.
The *Church* is the Spouſe of Chriſt, p. 42.
*Churches* Husband Chriſt only. p. 44.
The *Church* and every particular Chriſtian is ſubject to variety of changes, p. 73.
The *Church* in this latter age in a ſleepy condition, p. 86
None in the *Church* but have bin allured at one time or other to come in, p. 143, 144
*Church* to bee prayed for, p. 145
*Church* Chriſts love, and why *pag.* 164. &c. and 162, 163
Out of the *Church* no ſaving love, p. 154
*Church* reſembled to a Dove in ſundry particulars, *pag.* 167 &c.
*Churches* defence in her perſecutions. p. 171
*Church* of God hath alwayes a reſt in god in the worſt times, p. 172
*Church* how ſaid to be undefiled, p. 173 &c.
*Church* to bee accounted a Church though defiled with cor-

corruptions, p. 161, 162.
*Church* never totally left by Christ, p. 228, 233
*Church* how wounded by the Watchmen, p. 264
*Church* compared to Ierusalem in sundry respects. p. 272. &c.
The *Church* hath been alwayes persecuted by pretenders of Religion. p. 268, 269
*Church* how to know wee are members of it, p. 274, 275
*Church* faire under disgraces of the world, p. 301
*Churches* faireneſſe whence it comes, *ibid.*
*Churches* faireneſſe is within, *ibid.*
*Church* never more faire in Christs eye, then when she judgeth her selfe most deformed *ibid.*
*Church* how to be judged of under seeming disgraces, *page* 301
*Church*, nothing can dishearten it from commending Christ, p. 330
*Church* why so exact in particularising her beloved, p. 331 353
*Church* hath no golden head but Christ, p. 334
The end why the *Church* lets forth the excellencies of Christ p. 363 &c.
The heavy doome of those who are naught being in the *Church*, p. 379, 380
*Church* why Christ will not be long absent from it, p. 385
*Churches* and particular Christians sufferings, reasons of them p. 404, 405
*Church*, Christ never more neare it than when it is in affliction, p. 405
*Church* fed by Christ in fat pastures. p. 424

*Christians.*

Particular *Christians* in regard of the chiefest priviledges have the same regard as the whole *Churches*, p. 5
*Christians* should walk as men severed from the world, *page* 14
*Christians* should be fruitfull, p. 16
*Christians* not to wrong them, p. 41
*Christians* weake not to be discouraged, p. 63
No *Christian* but hath somewhat to welcome Christ withall. p. 61
*Christians* gracious are abased for defects and indisposition to good, p. 77, 78.
A *Christian* may know his estate though hee be mixed with

with flesh and Spirit, p. 94
A *Christian* is, what his heart is, p. 101
*Christians* how differenced from Hypocrites, p. 102
*Christians* who the best, p. 103
*Christians* waking their excellency, p. 112
*Christians* know the voyce of Christ even in a sleepy estate, p. 115
True *Christians* are discerned by their spirituall taste of the Word, *ibid.*
A *Christian* at the lowest longs after Christ, p. 27
*Christians* love should be confined to Christ, p. 179
*Christians* are not to wrong themselves by false judging their owne estate, p. 183
*Christians* lives should be nothing but a communion with Christ, p. 185
*Christians* wanting comfort not to be censured, p. 222
*Christians* at the worst have some sparkes of grace left in them, p. 234
To be a sound *Christian* is no easie thing, p. 261
All *Christians* not alike deserted of God and afflicted, p. 261 262
*Christians* in the upbraidings of conscience should looke as well on the good in them as the ill, p. 302
*Christians* care should be to study the severall excellencies of Christ, p. 331
*Christians* should endeavour to bee suitable to Christ their head p. 335
*Christians* compared to Cedars p. 344
*Christians* have more cause to boast their portion in Christ then worldlings of the world, 369
*Christians* in what respects they are compared to Lillies, p. 380
*Christians* why they want outward things, p. 401
It is *Christians* happinesse that they are not their own, p. 408
Weake as well as strong *Christians* the Spouse of Christ, *page* 413
Excellency of *Christians* walking in divine light above others p. 420
*Christians* happinesse in these dayes in regard of the plenty of meanes they enjoy, p. 429

*Censures.*

III *Censures* of the world, comfort against them, p. 381

*Company.*

*Company* with Saints is a meanes to preserve us in a waking temper, p. 104

Evill *Company* cauſeth Chriſt to withdraw himſelfe from *Chriſtians*, p. 121, 122

*Comfort.*

*Comfort* if not found in one meanes is to be ſought in another, p. 272

*Confeſſion.*

*Confeſſion* honoureth God, p. 76

*Confeſſion* ſhames Satan *ibid.*

*Confeſſion* prevents malicious imputations from the world, *ibid.*

*Confeſſion* gives eaſe to the ſoul, *ibid.*

*Confeſſion* is a meanes of preſent delivery out of trouble. p. 77

*Conſcience.*

*Conſcience* is a ſleepy temper, how knowne to bee awake, p. 97

Afflicted in *Conſcience* are not to judge of themſelves by feeling, but by what they are in Chriſt, p. 180

In the upbraidings of *Conſcience* Chriſtians ſhould as well looke on the good in them as on the ill, p. 302

*Conceits.*

Men are apt to frame falſe *conceits* of God and Chriſt, p. 195

*Convert.*

How to be happy inſtruments to *convert* others, p. 375

*Corruption.*

*Corruption* where it is not throughly purged and a carefull watch kept over the ſoule, there after a recovery will follow a more dangerous diſtemper, p. 75

*Correction.*

Seaſonable *correction* is an evidence of Chriſts love, p. 157

Patience of God to us ſhould make us patiently endure his *corrections*, p. 150

*Covenant.*

*Covenant* of Grace compriſeth not onely what God will doe to us, but our duty alſo we owe to him, p. 412

*Creature.*

All *Creatures* are obedient to Chriſt, p. 6, 7

In every *Creature* there are ſome beames of excellency, *page* 329

*D*

*Deſire.*

The *deſire* of Chriſt Children after his preſence makes Chriſt vouchſafe it them, p. 34

The Church is carried from *deſire*

*deſire* to deſire after the preſence Chriſt, p. 35

*Death*

*Death* of Chriſt how it is a ſufficient ſatisfaction for the ſinnes of the whole world, p. 328

*Deſertion.*

*Deſertion* outward and inward, p. 218

*Deſertion* to prepare for it, p. 225

*Deſertion*, the cauſes of it are in our ſelves, p. 226

*Deſertion* ends of it, &c. 219, 397

*Deſertion* ſignes of it, p. 147

What Chriſtians are to doe in a ſtate of *Deſertion*, p. 257, &c.

*Deſertion* benefits of it, p. 257

After *Deſertion* Chriſt uſeth to viſit his Church with more abundant comfort, p. 386

In *Deſertion* to ſee diſtemper is no wonder, p. 397

When uſually Chriſt returnes to the ſoule after *Deſertion*, p. 498

*Diſgraces.*

*Diſgraces* of the times ought not to make us thinke the worſe of others, p. 266

*Doctrine.*

*Doctrine* of Chriſt is ſweet and ſound, p. 341

*Duties.*

Holy *Duties*, encouragement to be frequent in them, p. 52

Spirituall *Duties* why ſhuffled off by men, p. 191

E

*Earthly.*

*Earthly* things men prone to by nature, p. 191

*Eyes.*

Chriſt hath cleare *Eyes* to ſee through all things, p. 337

Chriſts All-ſeeing *Eye* ſhould be a meanes to reſtraine us from ſin, p. 338

*Endeavour.*

*Endeavour* the benefit of it, p. 324

*England.*

*England* how Chriſt hath uſed all kinds of knocking to it; p. 138

*Envy.*

No *Envy* in ſpirituall things, p. 305

*Eſtate.*

A Chriſtian may know his *Eſtate*, p. 94

*Excuſe*

*Excuſe.*

No *Excuſes* will ſerve the turn at the day of judgement, but ſuch as ariſe from an invincible neceſſity or unremovable impediment: p. 202

Folly of thoſe that fetch *Excuſes* from the things of this life to keep them from the duties of Religion, p. 203

*Excellencies* of Chriſt. See Chriſt.

*Excellencies* of Chriſt why ſet forth by the Church, p. 363, &c.

F

*Fathers.*

Ancient *Fathers* in all things not to be relyed on, p. 85, 86

*Faith.*

*Faith* kept waking is a meanes to preſerve our ſoul in a waking temper, p. 105

*Faith* will carry a Chriſtian through all diſcouragements. p. 212, 213

*Faith* as it receives Chriſt, ſo it makes us give our ſelves to him againe, p. 411

*Fals.*

*Fals* of Chriſtians not to be rejoyced in; p. 254

*Faireneſſe.* See *Beauty.*

Church *Faire* under diſgraces, p. 301

*Fairneſſe* of the Church from whence it comes, p. 302

*Fairneſſe* of the Churches inward and hidden, p. 300

Church never more *faire* in Chriſts eye then when ſhe judgeth her ſelfe moſt deformed, p. 302

*Feaſting.*

There is a mutuall *feaſting* betwixt Chriſt and his Church, p. 61

*Feaſtings* of Chriſt have been more ſumptuous in ſome ages then in others, 69

*Feeding.*

That we need *feeding* as well as breeding in Chriſtianity, p. 426, 427

Why the ſoule needs continuall feeding, 427

Chriſt *feeds* his flocke plentifully and ſweetly, p. 428

*Feare.*

The *feare* of God is a meanes to preſerve the ſoul in a waking temper, p. 144

*Fleſh.*

Excuſes of the *Fleſh* to hinder communion with Chriſt anſwered, p. 186

*Fleſh* and blood are not to be conſulted with, p. 196

*Fruitfull.*

Chriſtians planted in Gods garden ought to be *Fruitfull*, p. 15

*Friendſhip.*

*Friendſhip*, ſpeciall things required in it, p. 71, 72

G

*Gifts.*

*Gifts* of others to be improved by queſtions, p. 303

*Glory.*

*Glory* to come to be ſet before our eyes to help us to paſſe through all diſcouragements, p. 214

*God.*

*God*, where once he begins grace there he goes on to increaſe and finiſh it, p. 18

*God* accepts and delights in the graces of his children, p. 50

*Gods* children never totally fall from grace, p. 99

*Good.*

It is not enough that we are *Good* our ſelves, but our good muſt flow out to others. p. 18

Chriſtians ought to labour to doe *Good* to all, p. 19

*Good* that is in us ſhould as well be acknowledged as evill 95. 302.

*Good* that Chriſtians retaine in a ſleepy eſtate, p. 95, 96

*Goodneſſe.*

*Goodneſſe* of God to man to be magnified, p. 98

*Government.*

We ought to be in love with Chriſts *Government*, p. 226

*Grace.*

*Grace* is not onely needfull to put life into us at firſt, but alſo to quicken and draw forth that grace we have, p. 9

*Grace* which God begins in us he will perfect, p. 10

*Grace* truely wrought in us makes us ſtill deſire a further preſence of Chriſt, p. 20

God delights in the *Graces* of his children, p. 50

*Graces* of the Spirit are acceptable to Chriſt, p. 46

*Graces* of others and our own ought to be rejoyced in, p. 56, 57

*Grace* compared to Myrrh, Spice, Honey, Milke, p. 60, 61

Gods children never totally fall from *Grace*, p. 234, 235, &c.

All *Grace* comes from Chriſt, p 228

*Graces* of God are ſweet p. 230

*Grace* to be judged by the value, not quantity of it, p. 260

True *Grace* growes ſtronger by oppoſitions. *p.* 271
A ſure argument that wee are in the ſtate of *Grace*, *p.* 271
Our ſtate in *Grace* may bee knowne by our reliſh to the Word, *p.* 346
*Grace* though ſmall in the beginning, yet it is ſtill growing, *p.* 371
Error of Papiſts touching the efficacy of *Grace* in congruity, *p.* 372

H

*Heart*,

*Heart* gracious is privy to its owne grace and ſincerity when it is in a right temper. *p.* 22
*Hearts* to approve them to Chriſt, *p.* 52
*Heart* what meant by it, *p.* 93
A Chriſtian is what his heart is, *p.* 101
*Heart* differenceth a ſound Chriſtian from an Hypotrite, *p.* 107, 108
*Heart* of a Chriſtian is the houſe and temple of God, *p.* 133
*Hearts*, how to know whether Chriſt dwels in them, *p.* 133

*Hereſies*.

Ancient *Hereſies* revived in the Church, *p.* 84

*Hearing*,

Our ſtate in grace may bee knowne by our ſpirituall taſte in *Hearing* Gods Word, *page* 116, 117

*Heavenly*.

*Heavenly* things how to bee brought to reliſh them, *p.* 199, 197

*Husband*.

*Husband* none of the Church but Chriſt, *p.* 44

*Hypocriſie*.

*Hypocriſie* man naturally prone too *p.* 193

I

*Infirmities*.

*Infirmities* ought not to diſcourage us, *p.* 242
Our *Infirmities* ſhould make us to prize Chriſt, *p.* 326

*Imperfection*.

*Imperfections* hinder not the acceptance of performances if wee be ſenſible and aſhamed of them, *p.* 22

*Imputations*.

What we muſt doe when falſe *Imputations* are laid upon us, *p.* 269
Comfort againſt falſe *Imputations*, *p.* 339

*Innocent*.

*Innocent* the third, the firſt that chal-

challenged the title of husband of the Church, p. 44

*Injuries.*

*Injuries* how farre we may be ſenſible of them, p. 270

*Inventions.*

Multiplication of humane *inventions* in the Church made *Auſtin* complaine that the condition of the *Jewes* was better than theirs, p. 84

*Juſtification.*

There is a neceſſary connection betweene *Juſtification* and Sanctification, p. 412, 413

K

*Knowledge.*

*Knowledge* a meanes to keep the ſoule in a waking temper, p. 106, 107

*Knocking.*

How Chriſt is ſaid to *knocke* at our hearts, p. 125

Why Chriſt *knocks* when he hath power to open to himſelfe, p. 131. &c.

Chriſts *knocking* is ſpecially by the Miniſtery of the Word, p. 142

L

*Lawfull.*

In the uſe of *Lawful* things we are eſpecially to bee watchfull over our ſelves, p. 111

*Life.*

*Life* of a Chriſtian ſhould be a continuall communion with Chriſt, p. 186

*Love.*

All *Loves* ſcattered in Relations are united in Chriſt, p. 151

Church Chriſts *Love*, and why p. 49. &c.

No ſaving *Love* out of the Church, p. 155

*Love* of Chriſt to the Church is free, tender and invincible, p. 155, 156

*Love* to Chriſt will ſet us a worke to glorifie God p. 158, 159

*Love* of Chriſt to us, how knowne, p. 259, 160 &c.

No *Love* comparable to Chriſts love, p. 162

*Love* of Chriſtians to be confined onely to Chriſt, p. 178, 179

*Love* to Chriſt will make a Chriſtian paſſe through all diſcouragements, p. 213

Firſt *Loves* raviſhment, reaſon of it, p. 258

*Love*-ſicke to Chriſt what it is, p. 285

How to know we are ſicke of *Love* to Chriſt. p. 278, &c.

*Love* is ever induſtrious to ſet out the praiſes of her Beloved, p. 313, 314

*Love* is wages to it ſelfe, p. 393.

*Love* why it deſcends, *p.* 390. 391
Our *Love* to God how cauſed, *p.* 391
How to have our hearts warmed with *Love* to God, *ibid.*
*Love* to other things how it may ſtand with our love to Chriſt, *p.* 416
*Love* to Chriſt will inable us to ſuffer and facilitate duties to us, *p.* 423

M

*Marriage.*
Reſemblance betwixt the temporall and ſpirituall *Marriage*, *p.* 43

*Meanes.*
Chriſtians are ſenſible of the *Meanes* of Salvation they enjoy, *p.* 119
Outward *Meanes* without the inward worke of the Spirit will do no good, *p.* 123, &c.
Outward *Meanes* muſt not be reſted in, *p.* 232, &c.
Uſually God workes with *Meanes*, *p.* 372

*Meekeneſſe.*
*Meekeneſſe* the definition and effects of it, *p.* 167

*Miniſters*, See *Watchmen.*

*Mortification.*
Two eſpeciall wayes of *Mortification*, *p.* 3

*Miniſtery.*
The woefull eſtate of thoſe that deſpiſe the voyce of Chriſt in the Miniſtery, *p.* 143
*Miniſtery* of the Word ſetting forth Chriſts excellencies to be in love with it, *p.* 377

O

*Objection.*
All *Objections* a ſinfull ſoule can frame againſt it ſelfe anſwered, *p.* 121

*Omiſſion.*
Sins of *Omiſſion* bring griefe and ſhame, 237
Sinnes of *Omiſſion* not to be ſleighted, *p.* 188, 139

*Old-age.*
Folly of delaying to ſeeke Chriſt till *Old-age.* *p.* 322

*Ordinances.*
All Chriſts *Ordinances* are ſweet and lovely, *p.* 341
Thoſe who hate and hinder the *Ordinances* of Chriſt are his enemies, *p.* 340

P

*Patience.*
*Patience* of God to us ſhould make us patiently endure his corrections, *p.* 150

*Perſecuted*

The Church hath bin alwayes *Perſecuted* by pretenders of Religion, p 268

*Perſecuted* ſide not alwayes the beſt, p. 268

*Popery.*

*Popery* crept into the Church by degrees and under glorious pretences, p. 85

Chriſt why ſo ſleighted in *Popery*, p.295

*Papiſts.*

*Papiſts* objection, how ſhall we know that the word of God is the word of God Anſwered p. 117

*Papiſts* error touching the efficacy of grace in congruity, p. 374

*Prayer.*

Order of Gods hearing his Church in *Prayer*, p. 29.

How God prepares our hearts to *Prayer*, and then heares us, p. 318

Our *Prayers* why heard of God, p. 29

Chriſtians when they have no friend to goe to, yet alwayes have a God to *pray* to, p. 30

*Prayer* to be uſed of Chriſtians, p.30

Spirit of *Prayer* loſt is the greateſt loſſe of all, p. 31

Caſes wherein one is unfit to *Pray*, p. 31 &c.

How Chriſtians croſſe their owne *Prayers*, p. 209, 210, 211, 212

*Prayers* how to know God heares them, p.34, 256

Beſt of Gods children cannot ſometimes *pray* as they would, p. 274,275

*Prayers* of others are to be deſired p. 94

*Preſence.*

Chriſt vouchſafes his gracious *Preſence* to his Children upon their deſire of it, p.35

*Preſence* of Chriſt how to know we injoy it, p. 37

*Preſence* of Chriſt is an Heaven on Earth to Chriſtians, p. 37

Having the *preſene* of Chriſt we need feare nothing, p. 38

Want of the *Preſence* of Chriſt caſts down a true childe of God p.248, &c.

All *Preſence* of Chriſts ſhund by a carnall man p 249, &c.

Not to be diſcouraged though we feele not the preſence of Chriſt, p. 253

Q

*Queſtions.*

*Queſtions* breed knowledge p. 303, &c.

Gifts of others to be improved by *Queſtions*, p. 304

Re-

R

*Rejoyce.*

Christians are alwayes to *Rejoyce*, p. 66

*Religion.*

Exercises of *Religion* discontinued causeth Christ to withdraw himselfe from a Christian soule, p. 121, 122

Exercises of *Religion* how to attain a spirituall relish of them, so that we doe not loath them and put them off with excuses, p. 196, &c.

Folly of those which fetch excuses from things of this life to keep them from *Religion*, p. 200

Young men are to inure themselves to the exercises of *Religion*, p. 202

*Religion* to be adorned for the bringing in of others, p. 304

To justifie our own and others pains in the exercises of *Religion* we must oft thinke of the excellencies of Christ, p. 364, &c.

*Resolution.*

*Resolution* is required in spirituall courses, p. 373, 374

*Resolution* helps to attaine to it, p. 375

*Righteousnesse.*

*Righteousnesse* of Christ how made ours, p. 175, 180

*Righteousnesse* of Christ perfectly to be trusted too, p. 351 352

S

*Saints.*

*Saints* stability proved, p. 164

*Satan.*

*Satans* accusations how to answer them, p. 403

*Sanctification.*

*Sanctification* a strong motive to it, p. 32

*Security.* See *Sleep.*

*Security* brings sorrowes, p. 241

*Seeke.*

How they that seeke shall finde, p. 260

*Sinne.*

*Sinne* should not discourage us Christ being made our Husband p. 46

Small *Sins* a griefe to gracious Christians, p. 82

*Sins* of the Church make not Christ take the advantage altogether to leave his Church, p. 123

*Sin* grieved for ought not to discourage us, p. 54

*Sins* of omission bring griefe and shame, p. 237

*Sinnes* of omission not to be sleighted, p. 237

Our *Sinnes* should nor hinder

our comming to Christ p. 316
Our sins rightly apprehended will make us highly value Christ p. 353, 354
How to answer Satans temptations to *Sinne*, p. 407

*Sinners.*

*Sinners* weake not refused by Christ, p. 123, 124
*Sinners* how they may be said to be holy and cleane, p 175, 176

*Sleep.*

What meant by the *Sleep* of the Church, p. 80, 81
*Sleep* spirituall resembled to bodily, p. 80, 81, &c.
*Sleep* spirituall resembled to bodily in the causes, 79, &c.
*Sleep* spirituall resembled to bodily in the effects of it, p. 79 &c.
*Sleep* spirituall resembled to bodily in the dangers of it; p. p. 81, 82
Best prone to *Sleep*. p. 86
Civill *Sleep* of the state what it is, p. 86
Civill *Sleep* a punishment of spirituall, p. 86, 87
*Sleepy* state the signes of it, p. 87, &c.
*Sleepinesse*, motives against it, p. 89
*Sleepy* secure estate the danger of it, p. 89
*Sleepinesse* makes us lose our grace in a great measure, & the sense and comfort of it altogether, p. 90
*Sleepinesse* brings crosses on us, p. 86, 91
*Sleepy* temper odious to God, p. 91
In the *Sleepy* estate of Christians what good is retained by them, p. 104, 105. &c.
Difference between the *Sleep* of a Christian and dead sleep of carnall men, p 119

*Spirit.*

*Spirit* of God in what respects compared to wind, p. 8, &c.
In what respects we need the *Spirits* blowing upon us. p. 11, 12
The *Spirit* is a meanes to preserve our soules in a walking temper, p. 101, 102
*Spirit* of God to make us spirituall, to be prayed for, p 212, 213

*Spirituall.*

In *Spirituall* things there is no envy, p. 306, 400

*Spouse.*

*Spouse* of Christ is the Church p. 42
*Spouse* of Christ none by nature, p. 44, 45
How to know wee are the *Spouse* of Christ, p. 47
Direction for such who are not the *Spouse* of Christ, p. 48, 49

*Spouse* of Christ her excellent condition, p. 49
Necessity of having Christ for our *Spouse*, p. 49
Weake as well as strong Christians the *Spouse* of Christ, p. 413

*Stability.*

*Stability* of Saints proved, p. 164

*Soule.*

*Soules* immortality proved. p. 164
*Soule* a precious thing, p. 208

*Suffering.*

*Sufferings* of Christ in himself p. 148
*Sufferings* of Christ in his Ministers, p. 148, 149
Our *Suffering* for Christ is a testimony of our love to him, p. 354, 355
The reason of the Churches and particular Christians *Sufferings*, p. 403, 404

*Suffer.*

Love to Christ will inable us to *suffer* with cheerefulnesse, p. 423

T

*Times.*

*Times* the worse they are, the better we ought to be, p. 188

*Truth.*

There is an antipathy in our nature to divine truths, p. 347 348

V

*Vaile.*

*Vaile* of the Church what meant by it, p. 264, 265
How the *Vaile* of the Church is taken away by false Watchmen, p. 264, 265

*Understanding.*

*Understanding* not to be defiled with error, p. 45, 46

*Undefiled.*

How the Church is said to be *Undefiled*, p. 173

*Unworthinesse.*

Our *Unworthinesse* ought not to hinder our comming to Christ, p. 71

*Voice.*

*Voice* of Christ is knowne of a Christian even in a sleepy estate, p. 111, 112

*VV*

*VVaking.*

*VVaking* condition how to be preserved in it, p. 103
A *VVaking* state is a blessed state, p. 103
*Waking* Christian his excellency, p. 112

*Want.*

We ought to be sensible of our spi-

spirituall *Wants*, p. 78
Christ will not suffer his to *want*, p. 402, 403

*Watchmen.*

*Watchmen* why used of God p. 262
Every man is a *Watchman* to himselfe. p. 263
How the Church was wounded by *Watchmen*, p. 264
*Watchmen* of the Church why they become wonders of it, p. 265

*Wait.*

That we ought to *Wait* Gods leisure, p. 340. 386
After all our seeking there must be *Waiting*, p. 388

*Wayes.*

*Wayes* of God ought to be justified of us by sound reasons, p. 202
*Wayes* of Christ are still constant and firme, p. 344

*Wicked.*

*Wicked* men how said to be Cedars, p. 344
*Wicked* men compared to thornes, p. 381

*Wickednesse.*

*Wickednesse* never wanted pretexts, p. 194

*World.*

Plodding upon the *World* takes away our desiere of heavenly things, p. 66

*Worldlings.*

*Worldlings* excuses to keep them from Christ, answered p 19, &c.

*Word.*

Papists objection, how to know that the *Word* is the Word of God, answered, p. 118
Why so many apostatize under the *Word*. p. 118, 119
When Christs *Word* is entertained, Christ himselfe is entertained, p. 136, 137
The wofull estate of those that obey not the Ministery of the *Word*, 144, 145.
Our state in grace may be discerned by our relish to the *Word*, p. 346, 347
*Word* of God though for the present it be not effectuall to us, yet at one time or other it will, p. 244
We ought to be in love with the Ministery of the *Word*, because therein the excellencies of Christ are set forth, p. 377

FINIS.

A pracar

Eternal and ever blessed god I desire to present
myself before thee with the deepest humiliation and
the basement of soul sensible how unworthy such a
sinful worm is to appear before the holy majesty
of heaven the king of king and lord of lord and
especially on such an occasion as this even to enter
into a [illegible] transaction with thee but the chief
[illegible] is [illegible] mine infinite condescension

Mary Simmons
Mary Simmons
Mary Simmons
Mary Simmons

Jo
Jo
Jo